**STAGE FLASH**

**Date: 22 April 2023**

**Day: 3 Flash N°: 14**

**Special stage: Kostanjevac - Petruš Vrh 2 Distance: 23.76 km**

**Weather: Dry and sunny, 19°**

**Road conditions: Dry but with lots of gravel on the road**

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**Car #69. KALLE ROVANPERÄ/JONNE HALTTUNEN (TOYOTA GR YARIS RALLY1)**

The world champion’s time is a 12m56.6s, which puts him ahead of Katsuta. “Really tricky to be honest, a lot of gravel. Where there have been normal road use and people walking on the road it’s quite messy and the Tarmac line is not so clean, not easy and I had one spin in one junction, really slippery braking and with the hybrid when you are braking on there it’s a bit tricky so I had to do a spin.”

**Car #7. PIERRE-LOUIS LOUBET/NICOLAS GILSOUL (FORD PUMA RALLY1)**

Loubet clocks a 13m01.1s. “It was much better this afternoon, unfortunately I made one mistake in the first split I go off of the line and I was in the dust so I lose a bit of time. For the rest it was an okay stage, now the car is much better, we found out what it was this morning so everything is fine.”

**Car #18. TAKAMOTO KATSUTA/AARON JOHNSTON (TOYOTA GR YARIS RALLY1)**

Katsuta’s time is a 13m06.9s. “I didn’t enjoy the stage but my co-driver said he enjoyed the stage but it was a strange feeling, tricky stage and I was not able to push.”

**Car #17. SÉBASTIEN OGIER/VINCENT LANDAIS (TOYOTA GR YARIS RALLY1)**

A 12m55.0s puts Ogier ahead of Loubet in the overall classification. He says: “Keep driving the same. I did a bit of a mistake in this one, I went straight in a hairpin where it was full of gravel, a very, very dirty stage.”

**Car #4. ESAPEKKA LAPPI/JANNE FERM (HYUNDAI I20 N RALLY1)**

Lappi spins on a tight left-hand corner midway through the stage. “The beginning was quite good but then it became a lot of gravel everywhere. On a junction I was afraid I would understeer so I pulled the handbrake and the rear was on gravel.”

**Car #8. OTT TÄNAK/MARTIN JÄRVEOJA (FORD PUMA RALLY1)**

Tänak’s 12m55.4s means he cuts the gap to leader Evans to 15.9s. Asked if he can catch Evans, Tänak says: “Let’s see, still some way to go, it was an incredibly tricky stage so we need to keep going.”

**Car #33. ELFYN EVANS/SCOTT MARTIN (TOYOTA GR YARIS RALLY1)**

Evans completes in 13m02.1s. “I was struggling to be honest, it was very, very loose but the car seemed to be very, very skittish, very difficult to get any sort of grip or confidence to be honest.”

**Car #11. THIERRY NEUVILLE/MARTIJN WYDAEGHE (HYUNDAI I20 N RALLY1)**

Crashed out of the lead on a right-hand corner 5.2 kilometres from the stage start. Both Neuville and Wydaeghe were uninjured but their car is too badly damaged to continue after the left rear strikes a large boulder when the car slides wide on loose gravel.

**Car #21. YOHAN ROSSEL/ARNAUD DUNAND (CITROËN C3 RALLY2)**

“I think it’s not an easy stage but honestly the grip is not the same as this morning, more down but honestly it’s a clean stage for me.”

**COMMENTS**

Ogier begins Saturday afternoon’s loop of four stages with the fastest time as Tänak closes to within 15.9s of leader Evans. Ogier moves ahead of Loubet into fourth, while Rovanperä demotes Katsuta to seventh. Nicolas Ciamin, who was second in WRC2 in ninth overall after SS12 crashes out.

**ENDS**

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