**STAGE FLASH**

**Date: 22 April 2023**

**Day: 3 Flash N°: 16**

**Special stage: Ravna Gora - Skrad 2 Distance: 10.13 km**

**Weather: Dry and sunny, 17°**

**Road conditions: Mainly dry but with gravel patches**

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

After clocking a 5m50.6s, Rovanperä says: “It was not too bad, for sure some sections are really, really bad. But, overall, it was quite okay, a lot of cuts and lines on the road.”

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

Loubet, with hard-compound tyres only, completes in a time of 6m13.3s. “It wasn’t working at all unfortunately. I lose the temperature in all the tyre, I had no grip.”

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

Toyota’s development driver stops the clock after 6m02.9s of running, a performance that puts him ahead of Loubet in the overall order by 2.5s. “Not much I am satisfied. I knew he would be on the hard so I was watching where it could be risky. On the next one I try to push more.”

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

Ogier’s time is a 5m53.0s, which is 2.4s slower than Rovanperä’s effort and means his margin over his Finnish Toyota team-mate is 1.3s. “Honestly I had a good stage, it’s difficult to go faster. It just gets so dirty, I am happy with my stage.”

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

It’s a 6m00.4s for Lappi: “It’s not difficult to maintain the concentration actually, but, to be honest, I cannot understand the pace of the others. I will go off if try, I can’t catch them.”

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

Tänak is through in 6m02.0s. “It was a disaster, that’s fine. Handbrake not working and things like this. It’s tricky when it’s shitty like this.”

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

Evans responds to Tänak’s advance by going 4.3s quicker than the Estonian in a time of 5m57.7s. The top two are now separated by 16.8s. “I didn’t think it was enough again to be honest, let’s say my feeling on the previous one was better when I was pushing harder, maybe that’s where I’m going wrong.”

**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 tried to do my best but the feeling in these conditions is not bad but he’s faster and it’s like that.”

**Car #24. NIKOLAY GRYAZIN/KONSTANTIN ALEKSANDROV (ŠKODA FABIA RS RALLY2)**

Gryazin cuts Rossel’s lead to 13.3s by going 7.2s faster. “I’m surprised because I was a little bit struggling again on these parts with the cut but my engineer told me if I will not win I will not got [my meat] and I am trying to get my meat!”

**Car #30. NICOLAS CIAMIN/YANNICK ROCHE (VOLKSWAGEN POLO GTI R5)**

Crashed out 16.8 kilometres from the start of SS13.

**Car #20. OLIVER SOLBERG/ELLIOTT EDMONDSON (ŠKODA FABIA RS RALLY2)**

“It was better than this morning definitely, I have a good feeling in there, not too bad. When it’s muddy and shitty like now it works quite well with the car. But still on the dry section of the stage I have a lot of slip but when it’s really muddy I can play with the car. It’s a little bit better.”

**Car #36. ALEJANDRO CACHÓN/ALEJANDRO LÓPEZ (CITROËN C3 RALLY2)**

Stopped 4.2 kilometres from the start of SS9. The Spaniard, who is making his Croatia Rally debut this year, had been in fourth position in WRC2.

**Car #26. SAMI PAJARI/ENNI MÄLKÖNEN (ŠKODA FABIA RS RALLY2)**

“This was for sure one of the trickiest stage for me in the whole rally and when I see the time now I’m really happy for that.”

**Car #22. EMIL LINDHOLM/REETA HÄMÄLÄINEN (ŠKODA FABIA RS RALLY2)**

“Those conditions keep anyone focused! It was not easy, actually quite rough. But all good, it’s better to take it a bit safe now.”

**Car #25. ADRIEN FOURMAUX/ALEXANDRE CORIA (FORD FIESTA RALLY2)**

“I’m happy, definitely, I didn’t get the nice feeling at the beginning of the stage on the dry but then I push in the dirty and I think we were quite efficient. I was a nice stage for us, quite clean. I would have expected a better time but the third time is not too bad.”

**COMMENTS**

Rovanperä goes fastest to close up to Ogier by 1.3s in the battle for fourth. Out front Evans’ lead over Tänak is back up to 16.8s with the Estonian reporting a handbrake issue. Katsuta passes Loubet for sixth place.

**ENDS**

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