**STAGE FLASH**

**Date: 23 April 2023**

**Day: 4 Flash N°: 18**

**Special stage: Trakošćan - Vrbno 1 Distance: 13.15 km**

**Weather: Dry and sunny**

**Road conditions: Dry, some damp sections and gravel patches**

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

Restarting following his crash on SS11, former leader Neuville finishes in a time of 7m03.7s. “The stage is quite clean on the beginning, slightly more dusty towards the end. It’s going a bit worse for the others. We are trying some different set-ups after yesterday, we’re going to see.”

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

After registering a time of 7m37.7s, Loubet says: “We had no engine, no stage mode. It’s like that, we see if we can fix it.”

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

Katstuta starts leg two with a 7m02.3s. “Actually I felt very, very good with the car. I don’t know how it’s going behind me, maybe they are going quicker of course, but at least the feeling is much better than yesterday but for sure I can try to push in the Power Stage and I try to find a bit more confidence with something else.”

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

It’s a 6m56.56s for the world champion and last year’s Croatia Rally winner. “Not happy with the run, I was trying to change the driving style a bit after yesterday on some parts but it was not a clean stage. We can be faster still but let’s see.”

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

Ogier is 3.7s slower than Rovanperä in a time of 7m00.2s and drops behind the Finn in the overall order, 1.7s down. “It was not a bad run but obviously he was better so a good stage for him. OF couse with three stages to go we are going to have to carry on with the fighting.”

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

Lappi completes in 7m07.9s. “Everything feels good. I don’t see any reason to take any risks so for sure the pace is not there where it should be but it would be still difficult to match even pushing flat out.”

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

It’s a 7m06.4s for the current runner-up. “It was an okay run. If we can get to the end that would already be positive. Let’s try to get to the end.”

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

With a time of 7m01.3s, Evans extends his overall lead to 30.5s. “Pretty okay. Obviously I heard the time of and I wasn’t sure if that was enough to be honest but all is okay.”

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

“The car on this road is not bad, similar to the first day. We will see what happens on the next.”

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

“I was sliding so much in the damp conditions at the end. Not easy, for sure I am trying to not let him escape. We will see. We need to keep pressure on him, I have no choice, I have to drive.”

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

“With a few damp places that surely surprised me at least. I will try to keep up the pace. It’s a nice stage and I like it.”

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

“The beginning was a bit like the end yesterday so it was quite okay, the middle section I drove horribly and then the end is very muddy and the car suits better there. Let’s hope for more shit today as I’ve said all weekend and maybe it works better.”

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

“I think I really need to push hard if I want to stay in front of him [Fourmaux]. This stage was not so bad, I try to continue in the same way.”

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

“Honestly it will be a good fight with him all the day. This is what we want ourselves. It was a really good stage for me. I was pushing especially at the end. Unfortunately I didn’t find a really good pace at the beginning but after was good and that’s okay.”

**Car #23. GUS GREENSMITH/JONAS ANDERSSON (ŠKODA FABIA RS RALLY2)**

“I’ll push a lot more in the next stage to get a feeling in the first pass and then try and get some points in the second pace and use the stage in between to save the tyres.”

**COMMENTS**

While Rovanperä begins leg three with a stage win, Evans now leads overall by 30.5s. Rovanperä’s effort, meanwhile, is 3.7s faster than Ogier manages, and the defending world champion moves ahead of the eight-time title winner in the outright ranking, taking fourth. Loubet reports being unable to switch his Ford Puma Rally1 Hybrid into stage mode.

**ENDS**

**Media contacts:**

Marko Šivak, [press@rally-croatia.com](mailto:press@rally-croatia.com)

[www.rally-croatia.com](http://www.rally-croatia.com/)

[**www.facebook.com/WRCcroatiarally**](http://www.facebook.com/WRCcroatiarally)