**STAGE FLASH**

**Date: 23 April 2023**

**Day: 4 Flash N°: 19**

**Special stage: Zagorska Sela - Kumrovec 1 Distance: 14.09 km**

**Weather: Dry and sunny, 13°**

**Road conditions: Dry with some gravel patches**

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

Neuville is through in 8m02.2s. At least we enjoyed the ride, the road was quite clean, much drier than in recce and much drier than expected as well. We tried to enjoy the run through and confirm the pacenotes for the Power Stage. We’re going to try hard but I’m not sure if we’re going to take a lot of points.”

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

Loubet’s time is an 8m30.9s following a troubled run. “Something with security mode [was wrong]. Now the steering is completely bent at the end of the stage. I hit something and now it’s completely bent. It was three kilometres before the end.”

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

It’s an 8m22.1s for Katsuta. “Previous stage obviously the feeling was very good but this on, I don’t know, super-tricky. I feel like on ice in some sections and you have no grip and if you brake a bit you lock up and you are straight forward in the forest. It’s scary but we are here and I try to find something better for the Power Stage.”

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

Rovanperä’s time is an 8m09.1s. “Pretty okay, I was struggling with the cross tyre a bit, it was more tricky than I expected with the tyres. A bit same than before, I was not clean enough and there are a few places where we can be faster by being clean and also a bit more brave. It’s a really tricky stage to take the risk. It’s a big challenge for sure.

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

Ogier falls 6.2s behind team-mate Rovanperä with an 8m13.6s. “He’s driving well, nothing to say. I couldn’t really push. I was struggling with a lot of blocking from the front. There’s no point to take too many risks for fourth place. I tried but it doesn’t really work at the moment.”

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

Lappi preserves third place with a time of 8m20.9s. “That’s a very difficult stage which you cannot enjoy.”

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

Tänak’s time is an 8m19.7s. He gives little away: “It’s hard work, unfortunately one more time.”

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

Rally leader Evans completes the first run through what will become the Power Stage in 8m21.0s. “It was pretty dirty in there to be honest, a few surprises at the beginning in terms of getting caught out on the dirt so then I took it a bit easy to be honest, it’s to be expected. A few little slides here or there, just trying not to do anything silly.”

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

“It’s not easy, honestly, I tried to push. The car on this condition is a little bit better than yesterday and we continue like that.”

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

“There was a jump on the last part, I felt like the jump is good so I put full throttle but I land on the kerb a little bit. I gess the rim is bent there seems to be the pressure on so let’s see how it looks like. But, okay, it’s a nice stage, it was enjoyable. For sure Yohan is also trying. It’s not easy but the stage is nice. It’s quite dirty, I was not expecting this. The cuts are making it a really difficult stage.”

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

“It was a nice save halfway through the stage, it was just braking, braking but it was really dusty. It didn’t look so slippery but it really caught us out and we’re happy to be here.”

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

“I put the softs on the front and it was moving like hell but it was worth a try. It was the first time I ever did this stage compared to everyone else and wow it’s difficult.

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

“For sure, I am trying to push in the places I know where I can but still some places I should be more brave. I think I’m not used to how much this car can really handle in such conditions.”

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

Fourmaux moves ahead of Pajari into fourth in WRC2. “That’s a crazy stage actually, so many compressions, we were hitting the sumpguard everywhere with jumps etc. It’s a proper rally stage and you don’t see that on a circuit, that’s really, really special. Honestly I was enjoying but it’s really narrow, you can only make mistakes but we were pushing and it’s positive. We take the position and this is what we wanted.”

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

“Just a trial run for the Power Stage but it all felt good. Like I said yesterday, I’m happy with the performance, the car’s there it’s just where I am in the standings is not where I want to be but apart from that all good.”

**COMMENTS**

Neuville goes fastest on the Power Stage rehearsal, Evans continues to lead with a margin of 29.2s over Tänak. Rovanperä is now 6.2s of Ogier in the battle for fourth. Loubet completes the stage with bent steering after hitting a pole. Fourmaux passes Pajari for fourth in WRC2.

**ENDS**

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