**STAGE FLASH**

**Date: 23 April 2023**

**Day: 4 Flash N°: 19**

**Special stage: Trakošćan - Vrbno 2 Distance: 13.15 km**

**Weather: Dry and sunny, 15°**

**Road conditions: Dry with gravel patches**

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

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

Neuville’s time is a 7m18.1s. “To be honest not [feeling good]. The feeling isn’t great but we are going to push as hard as we can. With only five points we can take from the weekend we need to go for it. But it won’t be an easy task.”

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

Loubet completes in 7m39.9s. “Unfortunately not so much luck this morning. My direction for my steering is completely bent so I am driving like that. I can’t turn on the left, it’s very tricky, so I am very, very careful because we have nothing to play and with the steering like that I just want to go through.”

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

Katsuta’s time is a 7m07.1s. “Of course it’s more like gravel and there was a lot of mud from the inside. I had to drive a bit careful but it was a nice stage anyway. Definitely easier to drive than the Power Stage.”

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

The world champion takes 7m02.5s to complete the penultimate stage of Croatia Rally 2023. “This one was not a good stage for me, I was not doing well. Even the startline was a big mess, the clock was not working normally and the launch was a bit stressful. Not a good stage from us.”

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

Ogier, who won the first WRC-counting Croatia Rally in 2021, registers a time of 7m02.6s after a moment through a left-hander close to the finish. “Let’s say the final stage is a different story, it’s the Power Stage and for sure points are counting for the team so we will have to keep pushing. It’s nothing wrong [with the brakes locking on the previous stage] bit set-up wise maybe there is something we can do. It was very, very dirty, more than I though. Okay, it was a good stage except for the slide at the end that cost maybe some time. We could not match the speed from the first stage.”

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

Lappi’s time is a 7m08.0s. “The strategy has been quite clear for the whole day [for the Power Stage]. I guess we can see from the tactics that Thierry is not with the same strategy, I am more on that side. There two different ways to approach the Power Stage.”

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

Tänak’s time is a 7m06.1s. “I am thinking about taking the car home, nothing else, it’s challenging enough. Let’s see. I was fooled with the start clock on this one. The clock froze on ‘58s.”

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

Rally leader Evans makes it through in 7m07.2s, which means the Welshman leads by 28.1s heading into the Power Stage. “You never know in this game, especially here with this tricky stage to go. You never know, we just need to keep focused now.”

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

“Honestly, no problem, we will see on the next stage, it’s the most important. For the moment all okay.”

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

“For sure we need to work on the Power Stage, let’s see. One stage to go, something can stage, if you do good then it’s clear but let’s see. It’s rallying still.”

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

“It’s always tempting to push on the Power Stage but I don’t know what happened in this stage. The countdown, the start lights were lagging and that hasn’t before. We will see, if we find a good rhythm why not [fight for the Power Stage win].”

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

“It’s drying up and we’re struggling more and more. At least halfway to the finish it’s better because it’s very dirty. I had no control over the wheels at all and I was locking up a lot of times, it was not easy. The Power Stage is very dirty so hopefully it will suit the car well.”

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

“I am not really sure, it was not so bad but I was a bit struggling with the tyres towards the end. I was hoping for better but it’s fine.”

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

“Actually I had a clean stage for me, I didn’t want to take too much risk in that one, I wanted to keep a bit my tyres for the Power Stage. It was a clean stage and I’m happy with my time.”

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

“It’s good, to be fair there are a lot of people in that stage but as soon as you get out of the trees in the Power Stage there are a lot of people and that’s one of the good things about Croatia, there are always a lot of people on the stages. Saving the tyres and go again for the next one.”

**COMMENTS**

Rovanperä repeats his earlier stage best as a slide for Ogier costs him vital time as he finishes 0.1s slower than his Toyota team-mate. Out front, Evans leads by 28.1s with just the Power Stage remaining.

**ENDS**

**Media contacts:**

Marko Šivak, press@rally-croatia.com

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

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