**STAGE FLASH**

**Date: 21 April 2023**

**Day: 2 Flash N°: 5**

**Special stage: Pećurkovo Brdo - Mrežnički Novaki 1 Distance: 9.11 km**

**Weather: Dry and sunny, 15°**

**Road conditions: Mainly dry with some gravel sections and damp patches**

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

Ogier’s time on the final stage of the morning loop is a 4m48.2s. However, there’s a slight scare when the 2021 Croatia Rally winner understeers on a right-hand corner following a downhill section and rips off the left corner of the rear spoiler. “Actually more slippery than I thought, especially the end section. We went a little wide into little branches. For sure when you lose a minute and a half the race is different, it’s a shame but what can we do?”

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

The Belgian is through SS4 in 4m50.3s to maintain his advantage at the top of the provisional overall order. “To be honest it’s hard. We are trying different set-ups all the time, but I just don’t get the right thing. Very similar to Monte Carlo where the chassis is moving a lot and makes the car very nervous, especially when it’s a bit faster I struggle to control the car.”

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

It’s a 4m52.8s for the Finn, last year’s Croatia Rally winner. “It was quite a nice stage, just struggling with the grip of the car too much. We need to find something on the service, otherwise it’s going to be a bit too difficult.”

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

Tänak outpaces by 0.8s to go second quickest: “For sure we have been trying a lot on the road section and it was a bit better in this one but I am happy to go to service now.”

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

With a time of 4m50.0s, Evans says: “Of course it’s getting dirtier with every car now. In places the car feels quite good, in other places we’re struggling a bit with the rear towards the end.”

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

Lappi completes with damage on the front-left rim. “For sure the first stage was quite horrible because of the conditions. The rest have been quite okay but for sure when you are discovering the stages for the first time it’s difficult to match the other guys. But we’ve done quite an easy job so let’s focus on the rest.”

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

It’s a 4m53.4s for Katsuta: “Of course changing surface so it’s not so easy to find the grip. So much better than the first two stages because there’s less cuts and less mud. Still not easy but the next loop is going to be more tricky so we need to focus for that.”

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

Loubet’s time is a 4m53.7s. “It wasn’t the easiest morning I would say, the conditions are tricky so we try to do some good runs. With the cuts and all of these things it’s difficult to have a lot of commitment.”

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

“For sure the pressure is off but you still want to do good and this morning has not been very good. The speed has been quite bad and I’m finding it really difficult with the car when it’s so dry, the set-up doesn’t really suit it and neither does the diff. We just have to work, I tried to push hard in this one. We try to do something in the service to at least get it better.

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

“It’s not bad, I don’t push very well. The plan this morning it’s to do no mistake, the car worked very well. I lose a little bit of time but it’s not my favourite stage. It’s like that and we will see.”

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

“The was a light to medium push. It’s a pity we lost some time in the second stage but nothing is over until it’s over, it’s a long game.”

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

“It was good, the car felt nice, now we’ve just got to focus on getting as many positions back as we can. I think we’ve got a good chance of getting back in the top five, we just have to make sure we have no punctures.”

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

“We maybe not have proper tyre choice [following the spin on SS2] but that’s how it is. It was slippery Tarmac but the car is moving too much. We need to find some compromise. It’s fun to drive because you jump and slide but it’s not easy.”

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

“It was a really, really good stage for me, the car was fast everywhere. I think we made a mistake with the tyres [selecting soft compound tyres only] so we will have to see for the afternoon.”

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

“It’s actually a really nice stage and I like it a lot. I’m feeling quite good, some places I know I could be faster but somehow I should be happy still.”

**COMMENTS**

Ogier is fastest despite ripping off part of his rear spoiler when he runs wide on a right-hander and strikes a branch. He’s 1.3s quicker than Tänak through the leg’s shortest stage. Evans outpaces Neuville by 0.3s and trails the Belgian by 16.1s heading to the midday service halt at the Zagreb Fair. Lindholm sets the WRC2 pace but it’s Rossel who heads the category after four stages, 29.7s ahead of Gryazin.

**ENDS**

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