**STAGE FLASH**

**Date: 21 April 2023**

**Day: 2 Flash N°: 8**

**Special stage: Krašić - Vrškovac 2 Distance: 11.11 km**

**Weather: Dry, overcast but also sunny, 17°**

**Road conditions: Largely dry with some gravel patches**

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

Ogier, with a cross-pattern combination of hard and soft compound tyres, clocks a 5m31.1s.

“Very fast stage, smooth Tarmac, a little bit better grip in places than this morning but in other less because more gravel on the road. It’s trying to find where you can push and not.”

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

Neuville completes in 5m29.4s. “It felt like the first real nice stage for the day. I have more confidence in the car. I didn’t change a lot, just a little bit on the clicks and it felt better but also the profile is different. Let’s see if we can confirm that in the last stage of the day and try to keep the lead, Elfyn is pushing. The day is not over and tomorrow is a huge day as well.”

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

Rovanperä registers a 5m31.1s: “Now it’s first time in this rally when I can enjoy the driving with this car, it’s working now like it should. Of course it’s much more enjoyable now.”

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

Tänak is fastest through for his first Croatia Rally stage win. His time is a 5m29.1s, which is enough to retake third from Lappi. “We need to try to stay closer. The decision on the last one was very, very stupid. We thought it was rain, but it was sunny. Anyway, we try to improve and we can still be better. Let’s go step by step, it’s a long way to go.”

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

Evans drops 0.4 to Neuville in his bid to take the lead: “I can’t claim that I’m cautious to be honest. I’m trying to drive to the notes and drive to everything else and everything is working pretty okay. It’s fine for now.”

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

Lappi completes in 5m32.8s and loses third to Tänak. “It’s fine, not yet, it’s too early [to focus on the battle]. It was nice, getting there step by step.”

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

Katsuta sets a 5m32.6s. “It’s a nice stage, honestly I didn’t like the first two stages. This one is quite nice, faster and nice and I’m enjoying.”

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

Loubet’s time is a 5m37.7s after he drives through the dry-weather stage with one wet-weather tyre. “I have no more tyres, I have to manage with it. It was a bit like dancing sometimes so not easy. It’s a weird set-up.”

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

“It’s been a horrible day, I tried at least to push. But I don’t know. Many times today the times have been so bad and the car is not good to drive when it’s so much grip like it is now. Little bit better on the second loop because there is so much dirt and I can keep up a bit better, that suits the car but it’s tricky conditions.

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

“The car is working very well, honestly it’s crazy. I think my tyre choice is not bad for this loop, we will see. One stage before the end, we will see. I think we will need to push because on the first loop I lose a bit of time but for the moment it’s a perfect day.”

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

“I did [enjoy that stage] after the mud bath in the previous stage, that was not so nice. Reeta was delivering the pacenotes well but we are playing catch-up now.”

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

“I took the advice from the team [for the tyre choice for the previous stage]. We had to try something anyway because it’s a long way back but we’re just now a bit further back. The speed’s there so it’s just a shame.”

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

“For the moment the tyre choice seems to be okay. I don’t know what the next stage is going to be but it seems to be not a bad tyre choice for the moment, complicated but okay. This stage was quite good and the car is doing good.”

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

“It’s really difficult to predict the conditions. We went with the cross and wet in the stage before and definitely it wasn’t the right choice compared to the team with the others. It’s part of the rally. Anyway we lost too much time this morning with the electrical, it’s like that, it’s rally and we continue tomorrow. Still a long rally.”

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

“Quite close to the end [of SS6] we spun and that’s it. I think we didn’t lose that much time but still too much. It was quite high speed and also a bit scary.”

**COMMENTS**

After the mud, rain and damp sections of SS6, dry roads and even some sunshine greet the crews on SS7. Tänak scores his first stage win to reclaim third from Lappi. Evans is 0.4s slower than Neuville and trails his rival by 8.4s with the final stage of leg one to come.

**ENDS**

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