**STAGE FLASH**

**Date: 22 April 2023**

**Day: 3 Flash N°: 10**

**Special stage: Kostanjevac - Petruš Vrh 1 Distance: 23.76 km**

**Weather: Dry and sunny, 12°**

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

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

World champion and last year’s Croatia Rally winner begins leg two with a 12m43.6s. “It was quite okay, that’s it. It was quite good feeling. Let’s see how it was compared to the others but the condition and everything is quite good in the stages so all okay.”

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

Loubet is unable to explain a loss of approximately 10s towards the end of the stage after completing with a 12m53.0s. “No mistake I just had a puncture. No puncture around the car? So something is broken behind the car, I don’t know.”

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

Katsuta completes with a 13m01.0s and drops behind Loubet in the overall classification as a result. He says: “Some sections are quite okay but when it starts in the forest there is a lot of dirt coming from the inside. It’s not so wet but stones which are dry are washing out everywhere so not so easy.”

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

Ogier, who checks in one minute late prior to the stage start having picked up a one-minute penalty overnight, completes with rear bumper damage in a time of 12m45.0s “It’s a bit dirty in places for sure like we expected but anyway we are not fighting for much. We had an issue in the car so we had to fix it [on the road section].”

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

Lappi’s time is an off-pace 12m56.4s. He says: “It felt quite poor in terms of grip so I couldn’t push.”

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

Like Loubet earlier, Tänak clips an Armco barrier on a fast hairpin-right turn with the left-rear of his Puma. The Estonian’s time is a 12m44.8s. He’s now 15.0s ahead of Lappi. “It felt quite okay, quite a big difference to yesterday with the car. For sure we can improve a bit. Strange it’s quite a big difference.”

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

Evans makes it through in 12m50.8s, which allows Tänak to close to within 18.3s and Neuville to pull ahead in the battle for first place by 10.5s. “Just a little bit too careful really on the gravel cuts. Some places good but others not so.”

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

It’s a 12m46.0s for Belgium’s rally leader. “Very dirty, very dirty but I like that stage, it’s an incredible stage with a hug rhythm, very fast, difficult to see the corners but it was much more dirty than we expected. We had a couple of nice slides in there but everything under control.”

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

“I think it’s not bad, I tried to push. In some parts I am quite cautious I think but if I am fast it’s the most important.”

**COMMENTS**

Tänak starts leg two with the second fastest time to pull clear of Lappi in the battle for third and edge closer to current runner-up Evans, who admits to being too cautious on patches of gravel. Neuville is now 10.5s ahead as a result. Ogier reports having to stop on the liaison section to fix an “issue”. Rovanperä wins the stage.

**ENDS**

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