**Press release**

**Meet the crew at Croatia Rally**

**Zagreb, 21 April 2022** – The top three fastest drivers from the Thursday morning shakedown, Kalle Rovanperä, Thierry Neuville and Ott Tänak, gathered to tell us how they were gearing up for Croatia Rally 2022.

**Q:**

Kalle, how have you prepared for Croatia Rally this time around?

**Kalle Rovanpera:**

“Last year was quite short for me, so this year I hope we are much more well prepared and after the test the feeling is good. It will be a difficult weekend with the weather I think, but hopefully we’ll do better than last time.”

**Q:**

It’s not quite as warm as last year and there’s some rain expected. How much more tricky is that going to make it?

**KR:**

“I think it is going to make it more tricky. Already the dry stages are quite tricky with a lot of grip changes and also quite a lot of cuts, so it will be quite dirty and slippery.”

**Q:**

You are in a great position in the championship right now and we saw you win in Sweden 53 days ago. It’s been a long time since you’ve been in action. Are you ready for it?

**KR:**

“Yeah, for sure. It will be nice to be back in the car again and hopefully it’s going to be a good weekend.”

**Q:**

Thierry, we saw some brilliant pace from you in Croatia last year. How much are you looking forward to this rally?

**Thierry Neuville:**

“Yeah, I’m really looking forward to it. It’s a great event. It’s definitely one of the toughest events on Tarmac we have ever had in the WRC and I think this weekend will be more interesting than last year. The weather conditions could be quite tricky and tough. Real change is waiting for us, but our experience from last year should make it a little bit easier. The stages are really tricky and at least we have confirmed our pace.”

**Q:**

Tyre choice really did spoil the party for you last year, didn’t it?

**TN:**

“Yeah, definitely. Last year the tyre was very new for everybody and we didn’t have much experience, the temperatures were low and the suggestion came from the tyre manufacturer that probably it was too cold for the hard tyres. We went that way and we went the wrong way. We probably lost our victory there, we lost the lead of the rally and we couldn’t catch back the time towards the end of the race. But still a good memory from here because when everything is working the stages are really beautiful and I was enjoying it a lot. Hopefully I can enjoy it as much this weekend.”

**Q:**

All three of you will be aiming for that top step of the podium, of course. It’s going to be a huge title fight this year, isn’t it?

**TN:**

“It will be. We have seen ups and downs for everybody at the beginning of the season, but the situation is quite similar for Kalle and me compared to last year. He was leading, I was second and now we have to have a good event – or I have to have a good event because after that there are a couple of gravel events coming and we know the cleaning of the track will be a real disadvantage for the cars opening the road. So we need to get some points from here.”

**Q:**

Ott, I’m sure you will be targeting big points this weekend. It’s been a tough start to the season for you, how are you feeling heading into this event?

**Ott Tänak:**

“I’m feeling OK. There have been some steps forward and it seems like everything is working as it should, so it’s already a good sign. Other than that, we know already it’s going to be a tricky event and a long weekend. For sure it’s important to keep it running without any problems.”

**Q:**

What do you think of the stages here in Croatia? You were fourth last year and had good pace, you everyone seemed to find the surface was difficult and slippy.

**OT:**

“Yes, it seems like the Tarmac material is quite different here, so it’s actually quite low grip. Myself, I was struggling quite a lot and I never felt good in the car. Other than that, it’s actually a challenge, a nice Tarmac rally that definitely has it’s place in the calendar. It’s challenging and that’s what rallying needs.”

**Q:**

We saw last year there were thousands of fans out having picnics and we’re predicting a lot of people this year. It’s good to feel that support, yes?

**OT:**

“Exactly, and that’s why the rally needs to be here. We have people here who are supportive and they enjoy what we are doing, so the rally really belongs here.”

**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)