**STAGE FLASH**

**Date: 24 April 2022**

**Day: 4 Flash N°: 19**

**Special stage: SS18, Zagorska Sela - Kumrovec 1 Distance: 14.09 km**

**Weather: Dry, overcast, then some rain, 7 degrees**

**Road conditions: Damp patches, gravel/mud dragged onto road in places**

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**Car #4. ESAPEKKA LAPPI/JANNE FERM**

Overshoots a left-hander, ruining hopes of a fifth stage win. “Very tricky. On the open fields it’s more or less OK. But the forest is very slippery. There’s a lot of mud and there will be more. On the overshoot, I got confused on the right before, I touched the block a little bit, so I completely missed the note. Now I remember it – probably, hopefully!”

**Car #7. PIERRE-LOUIS LOUBET/VINCENT LANDAIS**

Sets a benchmark of 8m33.2s. “It was tricky. Honestly, on the hard tyre it’s very difficult and they are very complicated stages. We tried to do our best on this one, so let’s see.”

**Car #44. GUS GREENSMITH/JONAS ANDERSSON**

Comes in 1s quicker than M-Sport team-mate Loubet. “It’s going to be like hell on the second pass [for the Wolf Power Stage]. That’s so much worse than last year. Give me four wets and I might be able to be quick on the second pass!”

**Car #18. TAKAMOTO KATSUTA/AARON JOHNSTON**

Sets a time 9.2s off Greensmith’s benchmark. “It’s so difficult. For sure, with every driver the mud is coming more and there is not much of a line. I am happy I am here.”

**Car #33. ELFYN EVANS/SCOTT MARTIN**

Through the finish 8.2s off the pace. “It looks pretty dirty in there – more than expected. I was just trying not to make the same mistake as last year!”

**Car #11. THIERRY NEUVILLE/MARTIJN WYDAEGHE**

Storms the stage to go 6.4s quicker than Greensmith. Fabulous effort. “I had a good stage. I want that podium and I’m going to get it.”

**Car #42. CRAIG BREEN/PAUL NAGLE**

Loses 12.3s to Neuville and slips back to fourth in the standings, by 7.8s. “I could do zero more. Nothing. Absolutely zero.”

**Car #8. OTT TÄNAK/MARTIN JÄRVEOJA**

Second fastest so far, 4.8s down on Neuville. “In the beginning it was a bit more dirty and probably there it was okay, but in the second part it turned dry. I think we were lucky it was so dirty, otherwise we would have lost a lot of time.”

**Car #69. KALLE ROVANPERÄ/JONNE HALTTUNEN**

Comes in 7.5s slower than stage winner Neuville, his lead to Tänak is only trimmed by 2.7s. “In the first stage the tyre choice was good, but in this one the soft [compound] would be better. I am happy we didn’t lose much time to Ott, but we had quite a clean run at quite an okay pace. It’s good.”

**Car #21. YOHAN ROSSEL/VALENTIN SARREAUD**

“It’s not easy and it’s not the same to last year. The feeling is not bad. With slicks it’s very tricky on the mud section. No mistakes which is most important.”

**Car #23. NIKOLAY GRYAZIN/KONSTANTIN ALEKSANDROV**

“I think we completely missed the tyre choice, so we just need to finish this. On this tyre it’s difficult to risk, to get some time. Unfortunately, it’s like this.”

**Car #24. KAJETAN KAJETANOWICZ/MACIEJ SZCZEPANIAK**

“Everything is open. I try to do my job as good as possible. This stage is more slippery than last year. So we are pushing, but careful. We are happy.”

**Car #26. EMIL LINDHOLM/REETA HÄMÄLÄINEN**

“I was enjoying it. It was like a roller-coaster, up and down and narrow. Full of surprises. Honestly I like this stage.”

**Car #29. CHRIS INGRAM/CRAIG DREW**

Some rain now. “Really bad, that. I made a mistake with the set-up going into it. We’ll see, we’ll keep going. The balance was just all over the place. I thought the tyre choice was good, but I didn’t have any confidence in the car.”

**Car #22. ERIC CAMILLI/THIBAUT DE LA HAYE**

More rain on the stage, loses 30s. “I got a lot of rain, at the same time I don’t understand the car. I do not have a good feeling when it is very slippery like that, so I cannot push more.”

**COMMENTS**

Thierry Neuville/Martijn Wydaeghe storm to a stage win, crucially 12.3s quicker than Craig Breen/Paul Nagle to snatch third place in the standings. Their advantage is 7.8s. Ott Tänak/Martin Järveoja are second fastest, but onl take 2.7s out of the lead held by Kalle Rovanperä/Jonne Halttunen. The gap between the top two is now 28.4s with two stages to run. Gus Greensmith/Jonas Andersson are third fastest on the stage, ahead of M-Sport team-mates Pierre-Louis Loubet/Vincent Landais.

**ENDS**

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