



MEET THE CREWS – FRIDAY – 20 JANUARY

Team principals

Jari-Matti Latvala (Toyota Gazoo Racing)

Cyril Abiteboul (Hyundai Motorsport)

Richard Millener (M-Sport Ford WRT)

Q:

Jari-Matti great start, happy?

J-ML:

Definitely. We know what Sébastien can do here in Monte Carlo, but even I'm surprised at the lead he's been able to build up.

Q:

And pleased with Elfyn?

J-ML:

Yes. I'm very pleased with Elfyn as well. He's recovered well from the puncture. When you lose 50 seconds or something, you can lose you feeling a little bit. He hasn't. There's still a long way to go in this rally.

Q:

Cyril, first full day in the WRC, what are your thoughts?

CA:

I enjoy it! I'm trying to find the way with my new home and my new job, this new sport and community. It's also a real-time sporting event. The team is very well rounded, they know what they're doing and what they're here for. I'm lucky from that respect.

Q:

Big battles, so much to play for...

CA:

It's remarkable when you look at the cars they're driving and the splits they're making – it's mind-blowing when you think about my previous sport. We're working with the tyres and the strategy, playing the long game and hopefully it will play off.

Q:

Rich, Ott's back how's the day gone?

RM:

He's made a good start. Maybe we'd like to be a bit closer, but realistically he's only been in the car a day and a half. We've made changes all day, but there's only so much we can do with a remote tyre zone. When everybody else is comfortable, it's always going to be tricky with so little time in the car. It's the season we're looking at, not one rally.



Q:

Tough for Pierre-Louis with the power steering problem?

RM:

He was doing a fantastic job before that – putting some great times in. We need to understand why the power steering failed, but a big round of applause to get through the afternoon. I'm sure he's been looked after by the physio tonight and I'm sure he'll be in some pain tomorrow, but it was a great effort.

Drivers

Sébastien Ogier (Toyota Gazoo Racing)

Kalle Rovanperä (Toyota Gazoo Racing)

Thierry Neuville (Hyundai Motorsport)

Q:

Fantastic start Séb...

SO:

I want to start with something completely different – it was Saint Sébastien's day today, so sort of my day. It's been a very good start. With the competition we know it's difficult to build gaps like this on one day. It was quite a stressful day, starting early with some issue with the clutch from parc ferme – the team did an incredible job changing the gearbox in 13 minutes. Thanks to them, I thought I would start with some penalty. Then I had the hybrid problem, it wouldn't turn on. I was worried and angry, I knew there was a long day ahead. But I still won the next stage without hybrid, but with a lot of risk. At midday the hybrid was reset and we could use in the afternoon. It's been good, but there's a long way to go.

Q:

Stable weather, that's going to help?

SO:

More stable than usual Monte conditions. There were some slippery sections, but it was quite consistent overall. I said in the past it would be good to go back to the real Alps and the Ardeche, there are even more beautiful roads than around here – there is a good probability you will get a Tarmac rally around here.

Q:

Kalle you really picked up your pace this afternoon...

KR:

The morning was not so good, not so good feeling and it was quite slippery in places with dusty road and salt on the big roads. The afternoon was better.



Q:

What's the plan for tomorrow – can you catch Séb?

KR:

We will push as hard as we can – Thierry is close. Let's see what we can do.

Q:

Third stage this morning, some drifting?

KR:

Yeah, too much speed, some cold tyres and we were going straight off the road. I was getting sideways enough to hit the barrier and not break anything.

Q:

Thierry, talk of tyre tactics today. What have you been doing?

TN:

I don't know if you can call it tactic – maybe more a plan. We all kicked off with different choice this morning, then this afternoon we were all on the same. That was the moment when we pushed harder to see where we are. It was hard, but we're not so far behind Kalle – we didn't win any stages, but we didn't hit any barriers.

Q:

Target for tomorrow?

TN:

The target I don't know, but the plan will be definitely to stay in the fight. Sébastien has a big lead, difficult to fight with him. We stay focused on the championship, we are close with Kalle and Ott is only 10 seconds behind. The gaps are close and these are probably the main rivals for the championship. I don't know if we can do much more, but Monte Carlo always has some surprises.

Q:

More in the tank?

TN:

There's always a bit more, but we didn't need more risk. I felt comfortable, the car was driving nicely. The performance is not so far away, but it could be difficult to match the Toyotas.