



MEET THE CREW

Friday January 24

1st Sébastien Ogier (Toyota Gazoo Racing)

2nd Elfyn Evans (Toyota Gazoo Racing)

3rd Thierry Neuville (Hyundai Motorsport)

Q:

Séb, tell us about your day...

SO:

Overall it's been a good day. The morning was not bad, but Elfyn definitely did better. In this case you know there's room to improve if your team-mate is going faster. I worked at the midday service on the set-up and with my gravel-note crew. I was not having so much confidence, they were too much on the safe side and we lose time with that. But overall I'm happy with the day, we stay ahead of Thierry, it's not a big gap, but we have to continue like this.

Q:

We saw Thierry open a big gap on stage two last night, but today shows things change quickly...

SO:

That's the rally where a gap can happen, we know that's possible. From what I heard there might still be some surprises coming before the end of the weekend. Tomorrow we can still have some ice, it's not so much, but when you drive with the slick tyre it's not easy. The feeling is good and I hope we can stay in the fight to the end.

Q:

It's been your first full day with the team, how's it been?

SO:

Yeah, step-by-step. It wasn't perfect this morning, I didn't have so much confidence, especially on the bumpy section. But in the same time, like we discussed Elfyn was able to do better, and when your team-mate can do this there's room [for you] to go faster. Sometimes you don't need much change, we did small things at midday and I felt better in the afternoon.

Q:

Elfyn, you dominated the morning – were you surprised at the speed you showed so early on?

EE:

We knew the testing had been good, but you can never know how that will translate onto the rally. To be honest, I felt immediately quite comfortable in the car. I found the feeling from the test and that gave me confidence to drive well. I wasn't trying to be crazy or stupid, just drive to a good rhythm. But this is tricky, this is the Monte and it never feels so safe. We'll continue to drive well stage-by-stage. Seb turned the screw a little bit this afternoon, let's see what comes tomorrow.



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Q:

Do you have more pace?

EE:

At the end of the day this is Monte Carlo, it's not really the rally where you take crazy risks. I have to hope to find the good feeling from the morning.

Q:

There's a tricky stage to start tomorrow – it's the one that caught you out last year...

EE:

Yeah, we were just discussing that. There might be a little bit more of a lift, I'll give him [Ogier] a few tenths there.

Q:

Thierry, you had an amazing time in the second stage last night, but there's still all to play for here?

TN:

Definitely there's still all play for. We are still in the fight for victory. I hope for a much better day. We had the good feeling yesterday, it was a great start and I was able to drive very fast in tricky conditions. This morning was all more complicated and I struggle for rhythm and I could not find confidence. I worked with Dani to improve our language to get more competitive and each stage was starting to look a little bit better. I look forward to tomorrow.

Q:

Dani Sordo is your safety crew driver – you're his boss now!

TN:

Dani is a very nice guy and I'm very happy the way he jumped in when Brun [Thiry] got sick. This was the only quick solution and he is one of the only guys I put a lot of confidence in. I will try to improve our collaboration, but of course it's only for this rally. On the next rally we are competitors again.

Q:

You saw the marks where your team-mate Ott Tänak went off, that slowed you down?

TN:

That's not what you want to see when somebody goes off at such a fast place. I thought he had restarted because people were slowing me down, so I thought he'd gone [off] again. I was told at the end of the stage he'd had a big crash. Now we have all seen the footage, it's very impressive. It's good to see our cars are safe.



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Friday, January 24, 2020

Tommi Mäkinen (Toyota Gazoo Racing)
Andrea Adamo (Hyundai Motorsport)
Richard Millener (M-Sport Ford)

Q:

Tommi, great day. Let's start with Elfyn. What are your thoughts on his performance?

TM:

I think we are all absolutely surprised at how quickly he found the car. Already in the morning he set incredible times. So incredible performance.

Q:

Seb lacked a bit of confidence this morning?

TM:

He was looking a little bit more nervous. He took it a bit more steady to learn the car and learn everything. He has a lot to learn!

Q:

The big question is whether you will run team orders?

TM:

It totally depends on whether the guys are together and if they don't do something.

Q:

Andrea, let's start with Ott Tänak's crash from this morning. What can you tell us?

AA:

I spoke a lot with them. We exchange messages. They are OK.

Q:

That's the main thing. It was a big one?

AA:

I have to say something I said already. We have to say something. The job has been done to make the cars safer. What has become a very spectacular accident for everybody, and I'm sorry if I'm boring you with this, but it is dissipating the energy. What is always worrying me the most is when something is not spectacular, but it's going from fast to zero in next to no distance. Normally I'm always having a big heart rate when it's like this. But when I first saw it (the crash), I almost said something I couldn't say!



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Q:

Thierry is right in the mix, just six seconds separating the top drivers. He sounded a little uncomfortable this morning, what can you do to make it more comfortable for him?

AA:

I said last year Hyundai in this kind of situation is still not as fast as it could be. There are things we could improve with the homologation, but thanks to God we have good drivers and co-drivers to catch up. I know Thierry and Nicolas what they have done today to be just six seconds behind and what kind of roads they faced today. I think they are going to have tough days, but maybe our drivers more because we are not where we should be and maybe in this kind of situation with the homologation limitation we will never be.

Q:

Rich, we've seen Esapekka Lappi struggling a little bit today. Why?

RM:

It's been a bit of a frustrating day. There has been a lot of new things for EP to get used to. Both the drivers only had one and a half days of testing and it's a big challenge – you don't get the same conditions on the test that you get here. There's much more mud on the road when you're following the top cars in here. We're trying some things and we'll continue to try a few new things tomorrow to help his confidence in the tighter, twistier places. It's been a difficult rally so far for us.

Q:

And what about Teemu, what can we expect from him tomorrow?

RM:

It's difficult when you're not really fighting for anything, but he tried a few things with the tyres. He can work to gain some experience for the following years. A lot has happened today, but it's still possible for us to fight for manufacturer and Power Stage points.