



SS16: DIGNE-LES-BAINS / CHAUDON-NORANTE

Date :	28.01.2024		
Day :	4	Flash N° :	27
Special Stage :	16	Distance :	19,01 km
Weather :	-2°C – cloudless		
Road conditions :	Dry, icy portions		

SS16: Neuville is getting close...

With just 14.8km to go on Col de Turini (SS17) and a 13.5-second lead over Sébastien Ogier, it's starting to look good for Thierry Neuville, leader of the 92nd Monte-Carlo Rally and fastest on SS16 between Digne-les-Bains and Chaudon-Norante (16.01km), in order to show, one more time, who is the boss this year.

"So far, so good. It was a bit more slippery than expected at the start and really dirty at the end, but I'm feeling fine. There's still one stage to go and I need to stay focused on the Power Stage," summed up the Belgian, as serene and smiling as ever. He knows the feeling, since he has already won the opening event of WRC in 2020, ahead of Ogier, after a similar driving display.

"It was already over after the first special stage (this morning)," agreed Ogier, with a smile on his face. "Thierry is flying. I'm not the kind of guy who takes risks for nothing", Ogier added, as if already acknowledging his defeat, without waiting for SS17 on Col de Turini. But the Gap man is not disappointed, and he says it clearly: "If I don't win a 10th time here, it doesn't really matter, because I've already won nine times, and nobody has done as well. Not even Seb Loeb, who has won 9 times in Spain and Germany, but only 8 times in Monte-Carlo.

There will be two drivers to keep a close eye on in SS17, aiming for the 5 points awarded to the Power Stage winner: Elfyn Evans (3rd) and Ott Tänak (4th), at the end of a rather frustrating weekend. They would love to close it in style, with a bit of panache, especially if the two aliens ease off a bit... which is far from guaranteed!



WRC
FIA WORLD RALLY
CHAMPIONSHIP



In WRC2, on the other hand, the game is far from over. There is now only a 0.9 second gap left between Pepe Lopez (Skoda) and Yohan Rossel (Citroën), while Nikolay Gryazin has dropped back to third, 5 seconds behind. Not over yet...

AUTOMOBILE CLUB DE MONACO

23 bd Albert I^{er} | 98000 MONACO | ☎ +377 93 15 26 00 | rallye@acm.mc |      

www.acm.mc



Quotes

13. MUNSTER-LOUKA

« Just before the time control, road was completely frozen. We didn't know what to expect from the gravel crew. The first few corners were quite icy but after that it was OK. »

18. KATSUTA-JOHNSTON

« After our gravel crew came through, there was black ice and frost in many places. It wasn't so easy but my plan is just to get through and finish the weekend. »

9. MIKKELSEN-ERIKSEN

« The stage is actually not so bad, but the same story with this one at the beginning. The conditions have changed so much since my gravel crew went through. After that, I was very unsure. »

16. FOURMAUX-CORIA

« I was losing the tyres at the end. We lost the hybrid also, but it should be OK. We're going to fix it. »

8. TÄNAK-JÄRVEOJA

« I didn't have a good rhythm on this one. The beginning was really tricky and I was not in a good flow. Some places are frozen and you start to hesitate in case the next bit is frozen or not. That's where the time goes. »

33. EVANS-MARTIN

« It was alright, but that's it. The start especially is very, very difficult. It's not easy. »

17. OGIER-LANDAIS

« It was over after the first one anyway. It's OK, we have done a decent weekend but [Thierry] was just flying so well done to him. »

11. NEUVILLE-WYDAEGHE

« It was nice. It's hard to judge the speed because it was actually much more slippery than we expected in the beginning, and it was getting really dirty. So far it feels good, but there is one more stage to go and we need to keep concentrated. »



Classifications SS16

POS	DRIVER	STAGE TIME	DIFF 1st	DIFF PREV	CAR No.
1	Thierry NEUVILLE	11:10.2	-	-	#11
2	Elfyn EVANS	11:10.4	+0.2	+0.2	#33
3	Ott TÄNAK	11:12.9	+2.7	+2.5	#8
4	Sébastien OGIER	11:15.7	+5.5	+2.8	#17
5	Takamoto KATSUTA	11:24.7	+14.5	+9.0	#18
6	Adrien FOURMAUX	11:27.4	+17.2	+2.7	#16
7	Grégoire MUNSTER	11:31.0	+20.8	+3.6	#13
8	Andreas MIKKELSEN	11:34.7	+24.5	+3.7	#9

After SS16

POS	DRIVER	TOTAL TIME	DIFF 1st	DIFF PREV	CAR No.
1	Thierry NEUVILLE	2:59:40.5	-	-	#11
2	Sébastien OGIER	2:59:54.0	+13.5	+13.5	#17
3	Elfyn EVANS	3:00:22.5	+42.0	+28.5	#33
4	Ott TÄNAK	3:01:35.2	+1:54.7	+1:12.7	#8
5	Adrien FOURMAUX	3:03:08.1	+3:27.6	+1:32.9	#16
6	Andreas MIKKELSEN	3:05:09.5	+5:29.0	+2:01.4	#9
7	Takamoto KATSUTA	3:08:06.2	+8:25.7	+2:56.7	#18
8	Grégoire MUNSTER	3:34:01.1	+34:20.6	+25:54.9	#13