



SS4 : CHAMPCELLA / SAINT-CLÉMENT

Date :	26.01.2024		
Day :	2	Flash N° :	7
Special Stage :	4	Distance :	17,87 km
Weather :	7°C		
Road conditions :	Dry, no ice		

SS4: Ogier, first!

Last year’s winner waited until mid-morning on Friday to set his first fastest time of the 92nd Monte-Carlo Rally: best time for Sébastien Ogier in his black Toyota Yaris on the first pass of the day between Champcella and Saint-Clément (17.87km), to come within just three seconds of Neuville, who lost a handful of seconds in a spin.

"I think it's difficult to go faster with this starting position (the same as Thursday evening, based on the 2023 championship standings), but in this stage there was a little less dirt on the road," reacted the eight-time world champion after the 693rd fastest time of his WRC career.

"I don't understand. I lost the rear, suddenly. I was surprised," said Neuville, who chose the right spot for his spin: a dry, flat field in which he didn't lose too much time. He reversed and started again, losing 9 seconds to Ogier, just when the Belgian driver could aim for a second fastest time in a row.

Evans stays ahead

The rally leader is still Elfyn Evans (Toyota), who has switched to management mode. He still holds a 18.8-second lead over Neuville going into SS5, the last of the first loop, and 21.9 seconds over Ogier. *"The grip was very low in some places. It wasn't easy and maybe I was too careful,"* admitted the Welshman.



WRC
FIA WORLD RALLY
CHAMPIONSHIP



The route of SS4 was varied, dry on the whole, and the numerous spectators were very disciplined, well protected by the ACM marshals and hundreds of metres of tape. Behind Ogier and Evans, Ott Tänak (Hyundai) regained his confidence after his small mistake on SS3. With the 3rd fastest time, he moved back to 4th overall, ahead of Adrien Fourmaux (M-Sport Ford), the Frenchman happy with his new set-up. But the Estonian, the 2019 world champion, found the road *"dirty"*, which encouraged him to drive *"clean"*.

In the chasing pack, the battle continued to rage between three supporting roles in this suspenseful play: Takamoto Katsuta (Toyota), Andreas Mikkelsen (Hyundai) and Grégoire Munster (M-Sport Ford), very close in performance at the end of this SS4. A really superb stage, from start to finish.

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Quotes

33. EVANS-MARTIN

« The grip was quite low in some places. Not easy, I was a bit careful. »

11. NEUVILLE-WYDAEGHE

« I just lost the rear. There's no rhythm, I have no idea. There must have been some gravel or something that I didn't have in my notes, but it was a big surprise for me. »

8. TÄNAK-JÄRVEOJA

« It's dirtier and there is more dirt on the road. I made a mistake this morning so I just took a steady run to be clean. We need to get to Sunday but we definitely need to score a lot with a stage like this. »

17. OGIER-LANDAIS

« I think it's difficult to really go faster with this start position. I am doing my best so far, but I have to accept it and we will see what we can do. »

18. KATSUTA-JOHNSTON

« Anything can happen in this rally so I don't think it's over yet. I try to push but it's hard to know how much to push at the moment. The car is working well so I just need to focus on the driving. »

9. MIKKELSEN-ERIKSEN

« It's quite dirty. The same as the previous stage, my gravel crew is going very early and [the conditions are] all changing. I am using my eyes, that's the only thing I can do to make it safely through the stage. »

16. FOURMAUX-CORIA

« We went the wrong way with the set-up for the previous one, but it was the right way for this one. I am much more confident. We had a clean stage and for sure, with all the dirt in front, I am quite happy to be only eight seconds down. »

13. MUNSTER-LOUKA

« The tyre was overheating a bit and the road position is quite tricky, there is so much gravel. Not the best run but we are slowly getting there. »



Classifications SS4

POS	DRIVER	STAGE TIME	DIFF 1st	DIFF PREV	CAR No.	CO-DRIVER
1	Sébastien OGIER	9:53.2	-	-	#17	Vincent LANDAIS
2	Elfyn EVANS	9:54.2	+1.0	+1.0	#33	Scott MARTIN
3	Ott TÄNAK	9:55.0	+1.8	+0.8	#8	Martin JÄRVEOJA
4	Adrien FOURMAUX	10:01.7	+8.5	+6.7	#16	Alexandre CORIA
5	Thierry NEUVILLE	10:03.2	+10.0	+1.5	#11	Martijn WYDAEGHE
6	Takamoto KATSUTA	10:03.4	+10.2	+0.2	#18	Aaron JOHNSTON
7	Grégoire MUNSTER	10:08.0	+14.8	+4.6	#13	Louis LOUKA
8	Andreas MIKKELSEN	10:12.9	+19.7	+4.9	#9	Torstein ERIKSEN

After SS4

POS	DRIVER	TOTAL TIME	DIFF 1st	DIFF PREV	CAR No.
1	Elfyn EVANS	45:30.7	-	-	#33
2	Thierry NEUVILLE	45:49.5	+18.8	+18.8	#11
3	Sébastien OGIER	45:52.6	+21.9	+3.1	#17
4	Ott TÄNAK	46:30.9	+1:00.2	+38.3	#8
5	Adrien FOURMAUX	46:34.4	+1:03.7	+3.5	#16
6	Andreas MIKKELSEN	47:20.2	+1:49.5	+45.8	#9
7	Grégoire MUNSTER	47:46.8	+2:16.1	+26.6	#13
8	Takamoto KATSUTA	51:45.4	+6:14.7	+3:58.6	#18