



SS5: LA BRÉOLE / SELONNET 1

Date :	26.01.2024		
Day :	2	Flash N° :	8
Special Stage :	5	Distance :	18,31 km
Weather :	10°C – Sunny		
Road conditions :	Dry conditions with a few patches of black ice		

SS5: Ogier strikes again...

Two fastest times in a row for Sébastien Ogier on Friday morning, in SS4 and then SS5 between La Bréole and Selonnet (18.31km). The local hero made the most of this first loop of stages to move up to 2nd in the overall standings, 10.7 seconds behind Elfyn Evans, his Toyota team-mate. The 92nd Monte-Carlo Rally is well underway and suspense is total. For the 3rd place on the podium as well, since Adrien Fourmaux (M-Sport Ford) is driving faster and faster...

"It looks like I'm still alive. I've had a complicated week but I'm going to do my best. I'll talk about it after the rally..." said a particularly emotional Seb Ogier at the end of this special stage, which marked the return to the impressive driving style which brought him eight world titles.

Faced with Ogier in maestro mode, the rally leader is still Evans, but he is now just ten seconds ahead of his French team-mate, 40 since December 17. His favourite number, the one he also carries as a race number on his black Yaris. Beaten by Ogier by 11.2 seconds on SS5, the Welshman was not confident: *"There's very little grip in the icy sections, and a lot more in the dry sections,"* summed up the reigning vice-world champion.



Fourmaux raises his game

In addition to Ogier's, the most successful performance of the stage came from M-Sport Ford driver Adrien Fourmaux, who set the 3rd fastest time just behind Evans, six-tenths only behind the Welshman. *"We had a good set-up and some very good notes, so I felt good and enjoyed myself without taking too many risks. I'm happy,"* said the Frenchman, back in Rally 1 after a season in WRC2.

On the Hyundai side, Ott Tänak found a good rhythm again and did better than his team-mate Thierry Neuville, on this stage, to make up for his small mistake on SS3. *"I had a lot of mentions of icy conditions in my notes and I was too cautious. It's complicated to take more risks when the co-driver's notes say that there's black ice everywhere",* regretted the Belgian at the stop point. He is now 3rd overall, 24.5 seconds behind Ogier, but anything is still possible on the remaining 12 stages until Sunday morning.

After the midday break in the Gap service park, a second loop is scheduled for this afternoon, with a second pass in the same three stages (SS6 to SS8). One thing is certain: they will be less slippery than in the morning version.



Quotes

33. EVANS-MARTIN

« Tricky stage, but it improved a bit [regarding the icy sections in the last 2 kms]. It's very complicated to drive where it is icy and I had quite good grip where it was not. »

11. NEUVILLE-WYDAEGHE

« I had a lot of ice in my [co-driver] notes at the end and I was just too careful. It's risky to take more risks when the pace notes say there is more ice everywhere. »

8. TÄNAK-JÄRVEOJA

« It was actually quite good, but this black ice is a bit different [than the usual] and you don't really know if it's before the corner or in the corner. »

17. OGIER-LANDAIS

« Looks like I am still alive, I was struggling so far, I'm having a tough week but I will try my best, I will talk after the event. »

18. KATSUTA-JOHNSTON

« The conditions have changed a lot after the gravel crew came through, so it's not easy to trust information. I am just trying to get more experience and finish the rally. »

9. MIKKELSEN-ERIKSEN

« For sure we would like to be faster, but I don't want to push it. We are a little bit driving blind but it should be better for the second loop. »

16. FOURMAUX-CORIA

« I am quite happy. We tried something on the first stage but we had to adjust a little bit between stages. Now I am quite happy with the car and I have the confidence. »

13. MUNSTER-LOUKA

« On the first stage this morning I went wide and was stuck. Here, there were also some icy patches and I was way too careful but from my experience of this morning I think that staying on the road is the best option [for me]. »



Classifications SS5

POS	DRIVER	STAGE TIME	DIFF 1st	DIFF PREV	CAR No.
1	Sébastien OGIER	10:10.8	-	-	#17
2	Elfyn EVANS	10:22.0	+11.2	+11.2	#33
3	Adrien FOURMAUX	10:22.6	+11.8	+0.6	#16
4	Ott TÄNAK	10:22.8	+12.0	+0.2	#8
5	Thierry NEUVILLE	10:27.7	+16.9	+4.9	#11
6	Takamoto KATSUTA	10:31.9	+21.1	+4.2	#18
7	Grégoire MUNSTER	10:39.2	+28.4	+7.3	#13
8	Andreas MIKKELSEN	10:41.1	+30.3	+1.9	#9

After SS5

POS	DRIVER	TOTAL TIME	DIFF 1st	DIFF PREV	CAR No.
1	Elfyn EVANS	55:52.7	-	-	#33
2	Sébastien OGIER	56:03.4	+10.7	+10.7	#17
3	Thierry NEUVILLE	56:17.2	+24.5	+13.8	#11
4	Ott TÄNAK	56:53.7	+1:01.0	+36.5	#8
5	Adrien FOURMAUX	56:57.0	+1:04.3	+3.3	#16
6	Andreas MIKKELSEN	58:01.3	+2:08.6	+1:04.3	#9
7	Grégoire MUNSTER	58:26.0	+2:33.3	+24.7	#13
8	Takamoto KATSUTA	1:02:17.3	+6:24.6	+3:51.3	#18