



## SHAKEDOWN : GAP

<b>Date:</b>	<b>22.01.2025</b>		
<b>Day:</b>	<b>SHAKEDOWN</b>	<b>Flash N° :</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Weather and road conditions:</b>	<b>Rain, 5°C</b>	<b>Distance :</b>	<b>3,28 km</b>

### Shakedown: Tänak shows his ambitions!

Ott Tänak (Hyundai) got the 93rd Rallye Monte-Carlo off to a good start by setting the absolute fastest time (2'09"8) in the shakedown on Wednesday evening in the hills above Gap. The 2019 world champion gave a first idea of what this 2025 edition could be: a sumptuous and fierce battle between four World Champions, from Thursday to Sunday, over 18 special stages and more than 300 km of timed sections.

Even if the results of this last practice session before Thursday's big start in Monaco cannot be considered significant, they will provide food for thought ahead of the start of the first special stage in Digne-les-Bains on Thursday evening. Tänak set the fastest time on his first run, at an ambient temperature of 5°C, before the sun disappeared for good, making it more difficult to improve performance. He was just under a second quicker than Toyota's two former World Champions, Kalle Rovander and Sébastien Ogier, who tied for 2nd place with a time of 2'10"6. The Estonian had already won the shakedown last year. But he has never yet won in the Principality.

Neuville very close...

Another big favourite, Belgian Thierry Neuville, the reigning World Champion, had to be content with a time of 2'10"9 on his 2nd run (5th), one tenth only behind another Toyota driver, Welshman Elfyn Evans (4th). Nothing to worry about, then. By way of comparison, this time last year, Tänak set a time of 2'00"4 on this 3.28 km section. Since then, the cars in the Rally1 category have lost their hybrid system and thus a few dozen horsepower. Their drivers also have to adapt to the new South Korean Hankook tires, which have replaced the Pirelli tires of recent years.

On the honour roll of this full-scale test session, third Hyundai driver Adrien Fourmaux, just transferred from Ford M-Sport, was ahead of Japan's Takamoto Katsuta, at the wheel of Gazoo Racing's 4th works Toyota. For Malcolm Wilson's British team, the best time was set by Irish newcomer Josh McErlean, 25, ahead of Grégoire Munster, who is starting his 2nd full season in a Rally1 car. The lowest Rally1 position was taken by Sami Pajari, the reigning WRC2 champion, at the wheel of the 5th works Toyota entered in this 93rd edition.



## Quotes

### 1. NEUVILLE-WYDAEGHE

“Happy to be here again. It’s nice to have the number 1 on the car, but that doesn’t mean it will be any easier this year. We have to fight for it again [the Championship]. We have clear targets as a team this year. We want to make the best out of it, try to go for both titles. Let’s give our best and try to enjoy it.”

### 33. EVANS-MARTIN

“I think it’s going to be a challenging weekend for us, probably a bit more than last year. This rally is always demanding. You have to try and enjoy the madness somewhere. The conditions, I think, were reasonably straightforward last year, this year, it looks a lot more mixed.”

### 8. TÄNAK-JÄRVEOJA

“It looked quite wet to be honest. It was quite tricky, the grip is quite unpredictable at the moment.”

### 17. OGIER-LANDAIS

“There was not too much snow, a lot of water. Getting very quickly dirty on the road. So it might be a very difficult weekend.”

### 16. FOURMAUX-CORIA

“It’s a really tricky shakedown already. A very much challenging shakedown at the beginning. It’s going to be a big challenge for all of us with the new tyres to understand them. It’s going to be interesting to follow, I think. I want to make the right tyre choice all the time.”

### 18. KATSUTA-JOHNSTON

“It’s a new year, a new feeling for the car tyres.”

### 69. ROVANPERÄ-HALTTUNEN

“It’s getting really really dirty at the end quickly. The road is full of mud everywhere. I think it’s going to be a tricky week, especially Thursday and Friday when we are not in the same starting place.”

### 13. MUNSTER-LOUKA

“It’s good to start with these conditions this early on slick tyres. I pulled twice the handbrake and something wrong happened, it disconnected. We are going back to service.”



## 5. PAJARI-SALMINEN

“The recce was interesting but even more interesting was here, I saw some deer, there were 5 deer in the middle of the road. I was really close to hit them. I lost a little bit of focus on that, but all fine. The time is ok.”

## 55. MCERLEAN-TREACY

“It’s honestly a dream to start this rally, start this shakedown, with the car and the whole team. Let’s ride the rollercoaster and see how it goes.”