



## SS12 : LA BÂTIE-DES-FONTS / ASPREMONT 1

<b>Date :</b>	<b>25.01.2025</b>		
<b>Day :</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Flash N° :</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Weather and road conditions :</b>	<b>8°C, half-dry, half-wet with some icy portions</b>	<b>Distance :</b>	<b>17,85 km</b>

### SS12: Katsuta's turn, Fourmaux consolidates...

A seventh different driver has won a special stage in this 93<sup>rd</sup> edition of Rallye Monte-Carlo, Japan's Takamoto Katsuta (Toyota), taking advantage of his position on the road, just like Gregoire Munster and Ott Tänak before him on Saturday morning in the Drôme. And Adrien Fourmaux (Hyundai) consolidated his 2<sup>nd</sup> place, 17.2 seconds behind Sébastien Ogier (Toyota), still the solid leader of this first round of 2025.

This morning's last special stage, between La Bâtie des Fonts and Aspremont (SS12, 17.85km), was very fast and followed by many spectators who arrived early. It enabled Katsuta to add a 41<sup>st</sup> stage win to his already impressive collection of five WRC podiums, in the space of 77 rallies since Finland 2016. He is the first Japanese driver to win a stage, ever, in a Rallye Monte-Carlo. And in the history of Japanese rallying, he still has one objective: to win a WRC event, like his compatriot Kenjiro Shinozuka in 1991 at the Ivory Coast Rally (formerly known as Bandama Rally).

*'This was a really difficult stage, I don't know why, but it was so slippery and at the end of the stage it was very greasy. We had slick tyres and the car was sliding all over the place. It was quite a strange feeling, but I really enjoyed myself. Kalle [Rovanperä] must have enjoyed it as well, the sliding part...'* joked 31-year-old Katsuta, who is now on the honour roll of this 93<sup>rd</sup> edition, whatever happens on Sunday.

Thierry Neuville (Hyundai) was in for a surprise on SS12, feeling better after an accumulation of problems since Friday morning, and he set the 2<sup>nd</sup> fastest time without the slightest problem, also on a cleaner road than his rivals: *'It's the first stage I've really been able to enjoy this weekend to be honest, I felt better in the car, we made a few changes to the set-up. We're still looking for grip in general, so you can't be too confident. But the feeling was better. You have to find a balance between grip and car control, and that balance isn't ideal yet,'* explained the reigning world champion.



In the overall standings, as the surviving competitors returned to the service park in Gap for a welcome mid-day break, Ogier now has a 17.2 second lead over Fourmaux and a 20 second advantage over Evans. In the WRC2 category, the French festival continues, with Yohan Rossel (Citroën C3) the undisputed leader, and a duel for the runner-up spot between Eric Camilli and Yohan's brother Léo. To be continued.

## Quotes

### 13. MUNSTER-LOUKA

5 Z215 WRC7 soft

"I didn't like the second half of the stage. Around the second half of the stage [the rain fell], we were too optimistic with the tyre choice, the first stage was fine but the second and third was too optimistic. It was a really tricky one at the end."

### 55. MCERLEAN-TREACY

4 Z215 WRC7 soft, 2 Z215 WRC9 supersoft

"High speed end, it's crazy at the finish how much speed you can get in these cars, it's bananas. It is more dirty than expected at the end, with the slime on the road. It's so hard when you're hitting these big speeds, you don't know what the car is going to do because you don't have the experience. It is good fun sliding in fifth gear."

### 1. NEUVILLE-WYDAEGHE

4 Z215 WRC7 soft, 2 Z215 WRC9 supersoft

"It was the first stage I could really enjoy this weekend to be honest, I felt better in the car, we did some changes. Still looking for traction overall, we cannot put too much in confidence. But it was feeling better. I was enjoying a bit more. There is a balance to find between traction and chassis control, the balance isn't right but we have to fight for tomorrow."

### 5. PAJARI-SALMINEN

4 Z215 WRC7 soft, 2 Z215 WRC9 supersoft

"I would say the same [as Thierry Neuville], quite slippery, it started to rain a little bit in some places and the last section is quite muddy. Quite sketchy but still quite a nice stage."

### 18. KATSUTA-JOHNSTON

4 Z215 WRC7 soft, 2 Z215 WRC9 supersoft

"That's a proper tricky [stage], I don't know why but it is so slippery, at the end of the stage it was so greasy. We have slick tyres and the car was sideways everywhere. The feeling was quite strange but I enjoyed a lot. Kalle [Rovanperä] should be good for [drifting]!"



### **8. TÄNAK-JÄRVEOJA**

*3 Z215 WRC7 soft, 3 Z215 WRC9 supersoft*

"Very mixed [road] condition, not easy."

### **69. ROVANPERÄ-HALTTUNEN**

*4 Z215 WRC7 soft, 2 Z215 WRC9 supersoft*

"Quite tricky conditions to be honest, especially at the beginning of the stage when it is really twisty and low speed, I am not comfortable with the car. I cannot get it to speed like I want to. Other than that, all ok."

### **16. FOURMAUX-CORIA**

*3 Z215 WRC7 soft, 3 Z215 WRC9 supersoft*

"I think the rain came during the stage, at the end it is very slippery and muddy. I think we lost a lot of time at the end but it is okay. We knew it would be a tricky morning, we thought it would be okay with slicks. But it's challenging. I am only looking out at Ogier and Evans, but I am keeping an eye on Rovannerä because you never know."

### **33. EVANS-MARTIN**

*4 Z215 WRC7 soft, 2 Z215 WRC9 supersoft*

"I had a bit more feeling at the beginning. Found everything a bit nervous. It's like that. More complicated than we expected this morning for sure, the cuts are much wetter and that is making the road dirtier, but that is part of the game."

### **17. OGIER-LANDAIS**

*4 Z215 WRC7 soft, 2 Z215 WRC9 supersoft*

"I tried to manage the risk, which is not easy on Monte-Carlo. In the previous one, it was more dirty, than I thought. In these conditions you need to be prepared to lose a bit of time. This was not so easy in places, [with] the rain coming at the end."



## Classifications SS12

POS	DRIVER	STAGE TIME	DIFF PREV	DIFF 1st	CAR No.	CO-DRIVER	TEAM/CAR
1	<u>Takamoto KATSUTA</u>	10:37.6	-	-	#18	<u>Aaron JOHNSTON</u>	GR Yaris Rally1
2	<u>Thierry NEUVILLE</u>	10:38.9	+1.3	+1.3	#1	<u>Martijn WYDAEGHE</u>	i20 N Rally1
3	<u>Sébastien OGIER</u>	10:40.0	+1.1	+2.4	#17	<u>Vincent LANDAIS</u>	GR Yaris Rally1
4	<u>Ott TÄNAK</u>	10:42.8	+2.8	+5.2	#8	<u>Martin JÄRVEOJA</u>	i20 N Rally1
5	<u>Kalle ROVANPERÄ</u>	10:44.7	+1.9	+7.1	#69	<u>Jonne HALTTUNEN</u>	GR Yaris Rally1
6	<u>Adrien FOURMAUX</u>	10:44.9	+0.2	+7.3	#16	<u>Alexandre CORIA</u>	i20 N Rally1
7	<u>Sami PAJARI</u>	10:46.9	+2.0	+9.3	#5	<u>Marko SALMINEN</u>	GR Yaris Rally1
8	<u>Elfyn EVANS</u>	10:47.2	+0.3	+9.6	#33	<u>Scott MARTIN</u>	GR Yaris Rally1
9	<u>Grégoire MUNSTER</u>	10:51.8	+4.6	+14.2	#13	<u>Louis LOUKA</u>	Puma Rally1
10	<u>Joshua MCERLEAN</u>	11:05.3	+13.5	+27.7	#55	<u>Eoin TREACY</u>	Puma Rally1

## After SS12

POS	DRIVER	TOTAL TIME	DIFF PREV	DIFF 1st	CAR No.	CO-DRIVER	TEAM/CAR
1	<u>Sébastien OGIER</u>	2:04:59.9	-	-	#17	<u>Vincent LANDAIS</u>	GR Yaris Rally1
2	<u>Adrien FOURMAUX</u>	2:05:17.1	+17.2	+17.2	#16	<u>Alexandre CORIA</u>	i20 N Rally1
3	<u>Elfyn EVANS</u>	2:05:19.9	+2.8	+20.0	#33	<u>Scott MARTIN</u>	GR Yaris Rally1
4	<u>Kalle ROVANPERÄ</u>	2:05:45.3	+25.4	+45.4	#69	<u>Jonne HALTTUNEN</u>	GR Yaris Rally1
5	<u>Ott TÄNAK</u>	2:05:46.3	+1.0	+46.4	#8	<u>Martin JÄRVEOJA</u>	i20 N Rally1
6	<u>Takamoto KATSUTA</u>	2:06:35.1	+48.8	+1:35.2	#18	<u>Aaron JOHNSTON</u>	GR Yaris Rally1
7	<u>Sami PAJARI</u>	2:08:50.0	+2:14.9	+3:50.1	#5	<u>Marko SALMINEN</u>	GR Yaris Rally1
8	<u>Thierry NEUVILLE</u>	2:10:06.1	+1:16.1	+5:06.2	#1	<u>Martijn WYDAEGHE</u>	i20 N Rally1
9	<u>Joshua MCERLEAN</u>	2:12:12.2	+2:06.1	+7:12.3	#55	<u>Eoin TREACY</u>	Puma Rally1
10	<u>Grégoire MUNSTER</u>	2:16:29.2	+4:17.0	+11:29.3	#13	<u>Louis LOUKA</u>	Puma Rally1