



SS17 : DIGNE-LES-BAINS / CHAUDON-NORANTE 2

Date :	26.01.2025		
Day :	4	Flash N° :	23
Weather and road conditions :	5°C, clean road, some portions with water and black ice	Distance :	19,01 km

SS17: Fourmaux back in the game

With the top three all within 22.2 seconds of each other ahead of the grand finale at around midday on the Col de Turini, the 93rd Monte-Carlo Rally was going to be a battle to the finish. It's hard to say whether Sébastien Ogier (Toyota) will be able to hold off Elfyn Evans (Toyota) and Adrien Fourmaux (Hyundai) to claim an historic 10th victory in the Principality. It was the fault of the Korean marque's new French driver, who started with a daring choice of tyres that paid big dividends on SS17, between Digne-les-Bains and Chaudon Norante (19.01km).

'It was a bit of a gamble and it worked out', said Fourmaux, who set off from Gap this morning with 4 Hankook super-tendres and two studded tyres on his car and in his boot, like Kalle Rovanperä, the two-time Finnish world champion. It wasn't the best choice in SS16 at the start of the morning, where the two drivers limited the damage. But it was the one that almost hit the jackpot on SS17, when Fourmaux set the fastest time, his second of the rally, 4.5 seconds ahead of Rovanperä. And the gaps were substantial at a crucial moment.

Over and above the raw result, it was the gaps over less than 20km that once again turned the general classification upside down. Fourmaux took back 23.9 seconds from Ogier, who left Gap with 2 super-soft tyres and 4 studded, and remains in the lead of the rally. He also inflicted a 17.8-second sanction to Evans, who remains second, but only just. The Welshman now has a lead of just four seconds over the Frenchman, who is back in 3rd place.

This performance was also achieved at the expense of his world champion team-mate, Ott Tänak, with whom he will be battling for a podium finish in the Principality, or better, if one of the leading Toyotas fails, in the last stage.



Behind the leading trio, and for the same reasons (different tyre choices), Tänak also lost a lot of ground on SS17: 27.8 seconds down on Fourmaux, and so 3rd place is gone, not to mention the fact that Rovannerä can now hope to steal 4th place from him, depending on what happens in the judge of peace, Col de Turini, at the stroke of midday.

These 17.92km between Bollène-Vésubie and Peïra-Cava, as is often the case in the Monte-Carlo, will be decisive on several levels of the overall classification. The top of the stage and the famous pass were still covered in snow this morning, but the snow was likely to melt throughout the morning... except in the very shady parts of the climb.

So we'll have to wait until 1 pm, approximately, to find out who was right, very early this morning, after the gravel crews had passed, making predictions. And whether Ogier will be able to win his 10th Rallye Monte-Carlo, including 9 in the WRC. *'This rally has been very complicated since the start, so we'll see...'* smiled the eight-time world champion before setting off again for the Alpes-Maritimes. He knew that anything was possible in the final kilometres, as was often the case in the legend of Rallye Monte Carlo...

Quotes

13. MUNSTER-LOUKA

2 Z215 WRC9 supersoft, 4 SR20 WR5 non-studded
Off-road 11.8km into the stage.

55. MCERLEAN-TREACY

4 Z215 WRC9 supersoft, 2 SR20 WRC5 studded

"Crossover of supersofts is slow. Honestly, it is quite difficult to read, our information has changed too much since [the ice crew]. It was unfortunate to see what happened to Greg [Munster]. When we saw him off, we backed off since then. We didn't want to take risks. Big shame for Grég, but let's get through the last one. The conditions are changing from damp, the grip is okay but suddenly there is nothing, you can't even see the road and you're waiting for the ice to defrost as well. Especially over the bridges, it's slippery in there, especially with the cross pattern, it's tricky with the balance change. My grandmother could probably have gone quicker in there."



1. NEUVILLE-WYDAEGHE

2 Z215 WRC9 supersoft, 4 SR20 WRC5 studded

"It's a lottery. It's very hard to see any ice, but there is. I even don't know what is a good tyre choice in there, at the end I was losing a lot with the studded. The handling [wasn't great]."

5. PAJARI-SALMINEN

4 Z215 WRC9 supersoft, 2 SR20 WRC5 studded

Off-road after hitting a bridge in the SS16.

18. KATSUTA-JOHNSTON

4 Z215 WRC9 supersoft, 2 SR20 WRC5 studded

Off-road in SS16.

69. ROVANPERÄ-HALTTUNEN

4 Z215 WRC9 supersoft, 2 SR20 WRC5 studded

"Really difficult condition to be honest, most of the stage is pretty okay but then you have some big surprises. Frosty and icy corners on a section, where the stage is dry or just wet. Definitely not easy. I lost a bit of time; I had one spin on an icy corner that wasn't in the notes."

8. TÄNAK-JÄRVEOJA

2 Z215 WRC9 supersoft, 2 SR20 WR5 non-studded, 2 SR20 WRC5 studded

"Makes sense [that Rovannerä can catch him]. So many black ice places which we didn't know about, so how can you push in conditions like this?"

16. FOURMAUX-CORIA

4 Z215 WRC9 supersoft, 2 SR20 WRC5 studded

"We took the race to be a bit aggressive on the first stage, and try to survive. After the last one, this is a bit comfortable. I am quite happy with what we've got now. We'll see with Elfyn [Evans] because he's not so far away. I still have the target [of second place]. We'll see at the end."

33. EVANS-MARTIN

2 Z215 WRC9 supersoft, 4 SR20 WRC5 studded

"Not a surprise, I struggled so much in here. We knew after the first one it would be difficult to keep [Adrien Fourmaux] behind now, but we do what we can do. Of course he does [he wants second], it's his to lose now. That's it, we are going to keep trying till the end anyway."



17. OGIER-LANDAIS

2Z215 WRC9 supersoft, 4 SR20 WRC5 studded

"Very muddy, I didn't expect that much at the end. Never easy this weekend. No idea [for Col de Turini], we will see."

Classifications SS17

POS	DRIVER	STAGE TIME	DIFF PREV	DIFF 1st	CAR No.	CO-DRIVER	TEAM/CAR
1	Adrien FOURMAUX	12:05.5	-	-	#16	Alexandre CORIA	i20 N Rally1
2	Kalle ROVANPERÄ	12:10.0	+4.5	+4.5	#69	Jonne HALTTUNEN	GR Yaris Rally1
3	Elfyn EVANS	12:23.3	+13.3	+17.8	#33	Scott MARTIN	GR Yaris Rally1
4	Thierry NEUVILLE	12:26.6	+3.3	+21.1	#1	Martijn WYDAEGHE	i20 N Rally1
5	Sébastien OGIER	12:29.4	+2.8	+23.9	#17	Vincent LANDAIS	GR Yaris Rally1
6	Ott TÄNAK	12:33.3	+3.9	+27.8	#8	Martin JÄRVEOJA	i20 N Rally1
7	Joshua MCERLEAN	12:55.9	+22.6	+50.4	#55	Eoin TREACY	Puma Rally1

After SS17

POS	DRIVER	TOTAL TIME	DIFF PREV	DIFF 1st	CAR No.	CO-DRIVER	TEAM/CAR
1	Sébastien OGIER	3:06:07.6	-	-	#17	Vincent LANDAIS	GR Yaris Rally1
2	Elfyn EVANS	3:06:25.8	+18.2	+18.2	#33	Scott MARTIN	GR Yaris Rally1
3	Adrien FOURMAUX	3:06:29.8	+4.0	+22.2	#16	Alexandre CORIA	i20 N Rally1
4	Ott TÄNAK	3:06:53.1	+23.3	+45.5	#8	Martin JÄRVEOJA	i20 N Rally1
5	Kalle ROVANPERÄ	3:06:56.2	+3.1	+48.6	#69	Jonne HALTTUNEN	GR Yaris Rally1
6	Thierry NEUVILLE	3:11:36.0	+4:39.8	+5:28.4	#1	Martijn WYDAEGHE	i20 N Rally1
7	Joshua MCERLEAN	3:15:40.9	+4:04.9	+9:33.3	#55	Eoin TREACY	Puma Rally1