



SS1 : DIGNE-LES-BAINS / CHAUDON-NORANTE

Date :	23.01.2025		
Day :	1	Flash N° :	3
Weather and road conditions :	4°C, dry road, slippery sections	Distance :	19,01 km

SS1 : Impressive Ogier!

Monte Carlo maestro Sébastien Ogier (9 wins) got the 93rd edition off to a flying start, setting the fastest time in the first special stage between Digne-les-Bains and Chaudon-Norante (SS1, 19.01 km) on Thursday evening.

Fitted with new Hankook super-soft tires, the eight-time world champion's Toyota Yaris was very efficient, and Ogier's driving did the rest on a narrow, slippery road that was not yet too dirty. In 11 minutes, 30 seconds and 4 tenths, the Frenchman inflicted 3.9 seconds on Elfyn Evans, his Toyota teammate, and 4.4 seconds on the new World Champion, Thierry Neuville, in the number 1 Hyundai.

"I felt pretty good. I was expecting conditions to be a little trickier. In the end, it was a pleasant stage, in terms of driving," said Ogier at the stop. The pleasant surprise of this first special was Adrien Fourmaux (4th), the new Hyundai driver, sandwiched between his two World Champion team-mates, Neuville and Ott Tänak (5th). The Estonian, who set the fastest time in the shakedown at Gap on Wednesday evening, has never before managed to win the Monte Carlo Rally.

Another relative surprise was Kalle Rovanperä (Toyota), back full-time in the WRC after a year of semi-rest (7 rallies contested, 2 wins), with a 15.6-second deficit on Ogier. But he wasn't surprised: "The other drivers did this stage last year, not me," recalled the young Finn, the youngest double world champion in the history of the WRC, in 2022 and 2023.

In WRC2, the battle began on a high note, with Bulgarian Nikolay Gryazin setting the fastest time in his Skoda Fabia RS. Just two tenths ahead of Yohan Rossel (Citroën C3). Meanwhile, Oliver Solberg had to stop on the stage to change a rear wheel, his rim having been damaged when he hit a large stone. The Swede, son of 2003 world champion Petter Solberg, lost almost 5 minutes in this first special stage. That already makes him a late contender in the race for WRC2 victory. But the rally still has a long way to go.



Quotes

1. NEUVILLE-WYDAEGHE

4 Z215 WRC9 Supersoft, 2 SR20 WRC5 Non-studded

"It was different. Taking off for the first time with these tyres, I was just trying to discover [the stage], not easy, to be honest. I don't know where the grip will change or where the grip will be. It's really tricky in these conditions to take off. It could be worse as well. Let's see. We need to work a bit on the car and to understand it."

33. EVANS-MARTIN

6 Z215 WRC9 Supersoft

"I lost my confidence a bit, there was a slippery part that looked like it continued longer than it did. I was a bit too careful at the end there, otherwise not too bad."

8. TÄNAK-JÄRVEOJA

5 Z215 WRC9 Supersoft

"All good, clean stage, no drama. It's Monte, it is normal here [to lose time]. Safe, clean run."

17. OGIER-LANDAIS

5 Z215 WRC9 Supersoft

"It was a pretty good feeling. I had to be careful with these tricky conditions. This one was nice to drive. [We have to adapt to] grip, making the right tyre call. [We have to adapt to] Many things."

16. FOURMAUX-CORIA

4 Z215 WRC9 Supersoft, 2 SR20 WRC5 Non-studded

"It's a big challenge, there is a lot of dirt on the road. After 10km it was greasy with the braking in the corners. I lost a lot of confidence after that, so I took it easy in the corners. Apart from that, it was really nice to drive with the spectators. Good fun."

18. KATSUTA-JOHNSTON

5 Z215 WRC9 Supersoft

"I tried my best. I don't know [what the issue is]"

69. ROVANPERÄ-HALTTUNEN

5 Z215 WRC9 Supersoft

"I'm not so surprised to be honest. It's a bit dirty and the guys made the stage last year. For me, it was a first pass and when it's dark, the first pass is never easy. For sure, not a good time, but it's like that."



13. MUNSTER-LOUKA

2 Z215 WRC7 Soft, 4 Z215 WRC9 Supersoft

"A really tricky one, getting very dirty. There was a section that was way more slippery than anticipated at the end, I wanted to finish my first stage safely."

5. PAJARI-SALMINEN

6 Z215 WRC9 Supersoft

"Really tricky, I felt really slow and tried to stay in the middle of the road. It is still fine. For me and everyone, it is better to finish the first stage and then build up the confidence step by step."

55. MCERLEAN-TREACY

6 Z215 WRC9 Supersoft

"What an experience! Everyone should experience what I've seen today. From lighting up the Casino Square to launching this beast into darkness... It's been a lot of excitement and hopefully we can build from here."

Classifications SS1

POS	DRIVER	TOTAL TIME	DIFF PREV	DIFF 1st	CAR No.	CO-DRIVER	TEAM/CAR
1	Sébastien OGIER	11:30.4	-	-	#17	Vincent LANDAIS	GR Yaris Rally1
2	Elfyn EVANS	11:34.3	+3.9	+3.9	#33	Scott MARTIN	GR Yaris Rally1
3	Thierry NEUVILLE	11:34.8	+0.5	+4.4	#1	Martijn WYDAEGHE	i20 N Rally1
4	Adrien FOURMAUX	11:41.2	+6.4	+10.8	#16	Alexandre CORIA	i20 N Rally1
5	Ott TÄNAK	11:43.9	+2.7	+13.5	#8	Martin JÄRVEOJA	i20 N Rally1
6	Kalle ROVANPERÄ	11:46.0	+2.1	+15.6	#69	Jonne HALTTUNEN	GR Yaris Rally1
7	Sami PAJARI	11:52.9	+6.9	+22.5	#5	Marko SALMINEN	GR Yaris Rally1
8	Grégoire MUNSTER	11:56.9	+4.0	+26.5	#13	Louis LOUKA	Puma Rally1
9	Joshua MCERLEAN	12:26.2	+29.3	+55.8	#55	Eoin TREACY	Puma Rally1