



SS2 : FAUCON-DU-CAIRE / BRÉZIERS

Date :	23.01.2025		
Day :	1	Flash N° :	4
Weather and road conditions :	3°C, wet and slippery	Distance :	21,18 km

SS2 : Seb Ogier continues...

Sébastien Ogier (Toyota) continued imposing an infernal pace on Thursday evening, setting his second fastest time in a row in the second special stage of this 93rd edition, between Faucon-du-Caire and Bréziers (SS2, 21.18 km), the longest special stage of the first evening.

The eight-time world champion completed another faultless stage, but was only 9 tenths ahead of Thierry Neuville (Hyundai), now in 2nd place, 5.3 seconds behind the Frenchman. *"The conditions on this stage were much more uneven than in the previous one. I was a little too cautious, especially at the end, but it was more complicated to be as committed as in SS1. I didn't do a good stage, but I set a good time,"* said Ogier at the end of SS2.

"This stage was very dirty at the end, so I had to slow down. I think the spectators dirtied the road a bit (by stepping on it)," said Neuville, a two-time winner in the Principality (2020 2024). As for Adrien Fourmaux (Hyundai), 3rd on this special stage just 1.2 seconds behind Ogier, the absolute benchmark for Monte-Carlo performance, he is now just two tenths behind Elfyn Evans (Toyota) in the overall standings.

The Frenchman had announced before the start on Thursday on Casino Square that he intended to run a waiting race, in his first race in a Hyundai after five seasons with Ford M-Sport. *"The speed at the start of this stage was huge. It was very tricky, with ice here and there. A special stage worthy of the Monte Carlo,"* summed up Fourmaux, author of five podiums last year in a M-Sport Ford, and 5th in the 2024 championship. Behind the leading trio, provisionally made up of Ogier, Neuville and Fourmaux, another Hyundai driver, Ott Tänak, took 4th place on SS2, 6.4 seconds behind Ogier.

This was a much better result than Kalle Rovanperä, who was only 9th on the stage, 22.9 seconds behind Ogier, i.e. more than a second lost per kilometer. The Finn, twice world champion, was even beaten by his compatriot Sami Pajari, also with Toyota but a Rally1 debutant.



"It's not me who's quicker than Kalle, it's the two of us who are bad," smiled the 2024 WRC2 champion, with total humility. In WRC2, the battle continued at the front between Russian-Bulgarian Nikolay Gryazin, in his Skoda Fabia RS, and Frenchman Yohan Rossel (Citroën C3). They finished ahead of Oliver Solberg (Toyota Yaris Rally2), who went back on the attack after a touch and a wheel change in SS1.

Quotes

1. NEUVILLE-WYDAEGHE

4 Z215 WRC9 Supersoft, 2 SR20 WRC5 Non-studded

"Much dirtier than expected. The road was full of muddy places. There was nothing when the gravel crew went through. In some places there was ice forming, in the last section, we had to slow down. The visibility was horrible. It was a great atmosphere [with the fans] and it looked super beautiful from afar, but the visibility was horrible."

33. EVANS-MARTIN

6 Z215 WRC9 Supersoft

"Very difficult, I found it difficult to read the grip, I felt like there was a layer of mud or dirt on the road. In so many places, it was difficult to read [the road]. I had a few slides in places, I was expecting the same level of grip everywhere. It was tricky."

8. TÄNAK-JÄRVEOJA

5 Z215 WRC9 Supersoft

"It's super tricky conditions. There were so many surprises. We tried our best but it is tricky."

17. OGIER-LANDAIS

5 Z215 WRC9 Supersoft

"It's a tricky one. Much more inconsistent than the first one. I was a little bit too cautious, towards the end. It is hard to be as committed [at the wheel] as the beginning and being fast. Not the perfect stage, but time looks good."

16. FOURMAUX-CORIA

4 Z215 WRC9 Supersoft, 2 SR20 WRC5 Non-studded

"It was incredible. The speed at the beginning of the stage was massive. Really really tricky. The ice was coming in some places. What a stage! This is a proper Monte-Carlo stage."

18. KATSUTA-JOHNSTON

5 Z215 WRC9 Supersoft

No comment made.



69. ROVANPERÄ-HALTTUNEN

5 Z215 WRC9 Supersoft

"The times aren't good. It is hard to say [what is going wrong] to be honest. Driving on the clear part is ok, very hard on the slippery and the muddy part."

13. MUNSTER-LOUKA

2 Z215 WRC7 Soft, 4 Z215 WRC9 Supersoft

"Last bit is really really muddy; the tyres cannot evacuate the mud so you need really to be cautious. But the worse was mid-stage, I wasn't expecting it but black ice came up a bit, not much, but just enough to keep you of the line, but with a bit of understeer in third gear, which is not nice for the confidence. Keep the car a bit low and try to get the grip but a really tough stage."

5. PAJARI-SALMINEN

6 Z215 WRC9 Supersoft

"Very tricky I must say. A lot of mud in the last section. Much worse than what I was expecting. I don't know how the grip is with the tyres on those muddy places. Just had to be careful. Some sections started to feel really nice. [He is quicker than Kalle Rovannerä]. Maybe we are both bad."

55. MCERLEAN-TREACY

6 Z215 WRC9 Supersoft

"I learn everything. It's a big learning experience. It's more daunting than anything I have ever done before, especially in the night and these conditions. But, it's some experience. *Mamma Mia!*"



Classifications SS2

POS	DRIVER	STAGE TIME	DIFF PREV	DIFF 1st	CAR No.	CO-DRIVER	TEAM/CAR
1	Sébastien OGIER	11:11.4	-	-	#17	Vincent LANDAIS	GR Yaris Rally1
2	Thierry NEUVILLE	11:12.3	+0.9	+0.9	#1	Martijn WYDAEGHE	i20 N Rally1
3	Adrien FOURMAUX	11:13.5	+1.2	+2.1	#16	Alexandre CORIA	i20 N Rally1
4	Ott TÄNAK	11:17.8	+4.3	+6.4	#8	Martin JÄRVEOJA	i20 N Rally1
5	Elfyn EVANS	11:20.2	+2.4	+8.8	#33	Scott MARTIN	GR Yaris Rally1
6	Grégoire MUNSTER	11:27.2	+7.0	+15.8	#13	Louis LOUKA	Puma Rally1
7	Sami PAJARI	11:34.1	+6.9	+22.7	#5	Marko SALMINEN	GR Yaris Rally1
8	Kalle ROVANPERÄ	11:34.3	+0.2	+22.9	#69	Jonne HALTTUNEN	GR Yaris Rally1
9	Joshua MCERLEAN	12:15.3	+41.0	+1:03.9	#55	Eoin TREACY	Puma Rally1

After SS2

POS	DRIVER	TOTAL TIME	DIFF PREV	DIFF 1st	CAR No.	CO-DRIVER	TEAM/CAR
1	Sébastien OGIER	22:41.8	-	-	#17	Vincent LANDAIS	GR Yaris Rally1
2	Thierry NEUVILLE	22:47.1	+5.3	+5.3	#1	Martijn WYDAEGHE	i20 N Rally1
3	Elfyn EVANS	22:54.5	+7.4	+12.7	#33	Scott MARTIN	GR Yaris Rally1
4	Adrien FOURMAUX	22:54.7	+0.2	+12.9	#16	Alexandre CORIA	i20 N Rally1
5	Ott TÄNAK	23:01.7	+7.0	+19.9	#8	Martin JÄRVEOJA	i20 N Rally1
6	Kalle ROVANPERÄ	23:20.3	+18.6	+38.5	#69	Jonne HALTTUNEN	GR Yaris Rally1
7	Grégoire MUNSTER	23:24.1	+3.8	+42.3	#13	Louis LOUKA	Puma Rally1
8	Sami PAJARI	23:27.0	+2.9	+45.2	#5	Marko SALMINEN	GR Yaris Rally1
9	Joshua MCERLEAN	24:41.5	+1:14.5	+1:59.7	#55	Eoin TREACY	Puma Rally1