



SHAKEDOWN: GAP

Date:	21.01.2026		
Day:	1	Flash N°:	1
Special Stage:	SHAKEDOWN	Distance:	4,25 km

Shakedown: Katsuta fastest

Takamoto Katsuta and Aaron Johnston got off to a flying start in the 94th Rallye Monte-Carlo by setting the fastest time (2'31"8) in the Shakedown on Wednesday afternoon in the hills above Gap. The Japanese driver provided the first minor surprise of this Monte Carlo, which promises to be as exciting as ever.

Obviously, the results of this final practice session before the Official Start in Monaco on Thursday shouldn't be taken as definitive. However, they will certainly give us plenty to talk about before the first stage kicks off this Thursday, January 22 at 16:05 in Toudon.

Takamoto Katsuta / Aaron Johnston set the fastest time of the **Shakedown** on their very first run. The #18 Toyota crew finished just over a second clear of teammates **Sébastien Ogier / Vincent Landais** and **Oliver Solberg / Elliott Edmondson**. « *This is a big year for me. I'm quite happy and feeling confident* », declared the Japanese driver.

Title contenders **Elfyn Evans / Scott Martin** took 4th place ahead of Sami Pajari / Marko Salminen, completing an all-Toyota top 5. The three Fords follow, while further down the order, Hyundai opted to run on studded tyres. **Adrien Fourmaux / Alexandre Coria** and **Thierry Neuville / Martijn Wydaeghe** finished 9th and 11th of the Rally1 class, respectively.



Quotes

1. OGIER-LANDAIS

"Happy to be here, like always, Monte-Carlo is always a special place. The sun shines today, it might be the last time it does this week, so let's see what happens. I think it's a tricky rally ahead. Again, it's often the case here, but let's see what the weather brings in terms of conditions. We'll see what we can do from the front. Sometimes it's good, sometimes it isn't when it is snowing, so we will have to find out, but at least, I agree with you, the car looks amazing."

33. EVANS-MARTIN

"Typical Monte. I think nobody's really sure what to expect in those moments. It looks like a particularly challenging one; I would say a big weekend ahead for everyone. I just want to get a feeling now with the car and the tyres."

11. NEUVILLE-WYDAEGHE

"It's not the best conditions for now. At the moment nobody really knows what the weather will be like for the weekend. What is sure is that it is going to be a very demanding weekend. I just wanted to get a feeling on the studded tyres [How strong is the package now entering in the first rally of the season?] We will see, I am quite optimistic that we can improve. We are going to find out. Let's say it's a long season again, lot of things ahead of us but I'm excited to be here and get the season going on. We are happy to be here. We had a transmission issue earlier and at the same time a mechanical problem that got us out of the road. It slowed us down a bit, but we are here and we will try to fine-tune the settings before the start of the rally."

18. KATSUTA-JOHNSTON

"New season, fresh mind. Just trying my best to deliver a result. This year is quite a big one for me. I'm really happy and confident."

16. FOURMAUX-CORIA

"It's been a very short time off but I'm really looking forward to the new season. Very excited to be at the start of the Monte-Carlo. It is always a very special event for me and the other drivers with all the fans. It's like a home rally to me so I want to enjoy it and do the best and hopefully get a better result than last year."



5. PAJARI-SALMINEN

“It's nice to be back. There are nice conditions on the shakedown now, but I expect the rest of the rally to be quite different. Looking forward but most likely will be tricky. The stage was OK. We had studded tyres, so it was not the best for those conditions but so far, it's nice.”

99. SOLBERG-EDMONDSON

“It's incredible, it's a dream come true. I'm so excited to get started, I was a bit nervous beforehand, but now the rally finally starts. [And you're rocking the pink colour!] Well, I needed to keep some identity so now it is wolf and donut pink.”

13. MUNSTER-LOUKA

“Yes, winning the Monte-Carlo again is the goal. We just want to enjoy it and to give our best. For sure more testing would have been ideal for the car. There are already a few things we need to adjust but I'm happy to be here and have fun.”

“We had a small issue at the beginning, but we made the changes at the service. Then we had a flat tire at the start of the second Shakedown, and we have a lot of problems with the intercoms.”

55. MCERLEAN-TREACY

“Let's go, we're ready! Less nerves than this time last year which makes it a bit easier to run it for a second season but there's one hell of a challenge ahead. [The weather right now is not reflecting what's it going to be like] No this is a nice proper tarmac road, but we'll see how it evolves; it's the same for everyone. A massive thanks to everyone who's made it possible to get here obviously for another season of Rally 1. It's not an easy fit to get here, so thanks everyone for bringing it all together. It was very good. We had a great time.”

20. PADDON-KENNARD

“We knocked it up a little bit in the gravel. Trying to get a bit of a feeling. It's going to be a tough rally.”

95. ARMSTRONG-BYRNE

“My nerves aren't too bad. Obviously, it's a tricky rally to start with, it's my first time here as well so there are a lot of new pace notes on recce and a lot of things to learn with the tyres and the car. It was a steady run but I'm still finding my rhythm because it's a very different car than Rally 2, but the time doesn't look terrible.”



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Stage times

POS	CAR No.	DRIVER	CAR	CLASS	Run 1	Run 2	Run 3	Run 4
1	# 18	🇯🇵 Takamoto KATSUTA	Toyota GR Yaris Rally1	RC1	02:31.8	02:38.1	10:00.0	-
2	# 1	🇫🇷 Sébastien OGIER	Toyota GR Yaris Rally1	RC1	02:36.1	02:33.1	02:43.7	-
3	# 99	🇸🇪 Oliver SOLBERG	Toyota GR Yaris Rally1	RC1	02:34.7	02:34.4	02:44.5	-
4	# 33	🇬🇧 Elfyn EVANS	Toyota GR Yaris Rally1	RC1	02:35.0	02:37.6	02:45.3	-
5	# 5	🇫🇮 Sami PAJARI	Toyota GR Yaris Rally1	RC1	02:35.1	02:41.7	02:45.8	-
6	# 55	🇮🇪 Joshua MCERLEAN	Puma Rally1	RC1	02:37.9	02:37.4	02:36.8	10:00.0
7	# 95	🇮🇪 Jon ARMSTRONG	Puma Rally1	RC1	02:39.2	02:37.4	02:37.3	02:38.2
8	# 13	🇫🇷 Grégoire MUNSTER	Puma Rally1	RC1	02:38.0	02:38.7	02:37.9	02:37.9
9	# 16	🇫🇷 Adrien FOURMAUX	Hyundai i20 N Rally1	RC1	02:46.6	02:48.4	02:41.6	-
10	# 20	🇪🇺 Hayden PADDON	Hyundai i20 N Rally1	RC1	02:42.4	02:47.4	02:46.5	-
11	# 11	🇫🇷 Thierry NEUVILLE	Hyundai i20 N Rally1	RC1	02:45.1	-	02:48.7	-

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