



### SS9 : LA-BÂTIE-DES-FONTS / ASPREMONT 2

<b>Date:</b>	<b>23.01.2026</b>		
<b>Day:</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Flash N°:</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Special Stage:</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>Distance:</b>	<b>17,79 km</b>
<b>Weather:</b>	<b>3°C – Light rain</b>		
<b>Road conditions:</b>	<b>Fog, slush and snow on the road for the first 7 kms, with sometimes short tarmac sections. Afterwards, full wet conditions.</b>		

#### SS9: Ogier prepares for the weekend!

**Sébastien Ogier (Toyota)** got his weekend off to a good start at the 94<sup>th</sup> Monte Carlo Rally by winning SS9 (17.8 km) on Friday evening between La Bâtie des Fonts and Aspremont, recording his second consecutive stage win. Ahead of his two Gazoo Racing teammates, **Oliver Solberg**, who remains in the lead, and **Elfyn Evans**, who now has only a six-second lead over the nine-time World Champion.

It was pitch dark and raining when Ogier finished SS9 with a smile, completing the second loop of a very difficult Friday for all drivers. His goal on Saturday will be to take second place from Evans. ‘It was still a question of survival, and there was a lot of mud on this stage,’ Ogier said at the stop point. ‘I wasn’t brave enough,’ lamented Evans, five-time WRC vice-world champion, including three times behind Ogier.

Leader **Oliver Solberg**, in the third leading Yaris, switched to management mode on Friday afternoon, preferring to maintain a comfortable one-minute lead over Evans and Ogier at the halfway point rather than taking too many risks in conditions that remained treacherous. He returned to Gap satisfied with a job well done in only his second rally in a factory Toyota Yaris (after his victory in Estonia in 2025).

The Hyundai drivers lost a lot on Friday, and **Adrien Fourmaux**, despite a hydraulic handbrake failure, took 4<sup>th</sup> place from **Thierry Neuville**, five minutes behind Solberg. The Belgian former World Champion was very happy to come out of SS9 with only a 3 minute and 40 second deficit to Ogier. Stuck in a snowy ditch, he thanked, at the stop point, the handful of fans who had pulled him out of this trap where he had stuck his Korean car in the first section of the stage, the most slippery portion in the middle of the forest.



In WRC2, the antechamber of the World Rally Championship, this very eventful day ended with a solid leader at the helm, Frenchman Léo Rossel (Citroën C3), ahead of his compatriot Eric Camilli (Skoda Fabia) followed by Russian Nikolay Gryazin. This driver races under a Bulgarian licence and drives the brand new Lancia Ypsilon HF Integrale, marking the prestigious Italian brand's comeback to the WRC.

## Quotes

### **55. MCERLEAN-TREACY**

*2 Super-soft, 4 Studs*

Went off into a ditch at 1.6 km.

### **5. PAJARI-SALMINEN**

*2 Studs, 4 Snow*

"Quite early in the stage Josh [McErlean] was in the snowbank and I wasn't sure if there was any ice, I didn't know. We went safely through. Tomorrow is a new day and we will try to improve our own things."

### **1. OGIER-LANDAIS**

*2 Studs, 4 Snow*

"I don't know, it's a survival mode because there is so much mud on the road. We tried to have a better afternoon than the morning loop. There was a bit of slush in the beginning, the rest was full mud."

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

*2 Studs, 4 Snow*

"I wasn't brave enough in the ruts, not ideal. It's been an okay day, with some ups and downs."

### **11. NEUVILLE-WYDAEGHE**

*2 Studs, 4 Snow*

Went off into a ditch at 2 kms. "I just got hooked in a cut and there was no way to get out. There was a car in front of us that probably made the ditch. We are here and the day is over but it has been a bit of a struggle."

### **18. KATSUTA-JOHNSTON**

*2 Studs, 4 Snow*

"It is a big job to go through the stages. My hands are quite bad but it is okay. Unfortunately, that's how it is. We still have two days to go."



## 16. FOURMAUX-CORIA

*2 Studs, 4 Snow*

“Since we left the service park we had a lot of electronic issues with the fuel pump and the handbrake. I have no handbrake and nothing to save me if I need it. Every time I was scared I would understeer. In all the hairpins, I had to reverse or be very careful. That was a tricky loop for us and it was quite challenging. For sure we are losing a lot of time. We are now a bit in no man's land. Let's see.”

## 99. SOLBERG-EDMONDSON

*2 Studs, 4 Snow*

“I just wanted to get through, there is so much happening. I had a crossed option, I'm not sure it was a good choice. I extended my lead today, so I'm happy. Séb [Ogier] is not talking to me as much [when asked if the world champion is still offering advice] It's so tricky all the time. It's a long way to go.”

## 13. MUNSTER-LOUKA

*2 Studs, 4 Snow*

“We are enjoying it a lot. It might always be the last dance so we just have a nice time. Without the strange punctures and the power steering issue, we would be in place for a nice result. Let's try to see what we can do. It's still a long rally and as you can see, a lot of things are happening.”

## 20. PADDON-KENNARD

*2 Studs, 4 Snow*

“I just stalled the car under braking in the snow. Really tricky stage, just a matter of getting through, but the slower you drive, the harder it gets. We're here. Excited to be tomorrow. Character building is an understatement [for this rally].”

## 95. ARMSTRONG-BYRNE

*2 Super-soft, 2 Studs, 2 Snow*

“It was pure survival to be fair, especially with two slicks on the car. I just tried to get through and there is not much to gain if we push with the tyres. You don't feel like a superhero but you have to be smart sometimes. Considering the issues we had, tyres issues and broken rim, it hasn't been an easy day, but that's Monte.”



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## Classifications

### SS9

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	STAGE TIME	DIFF PREV	DIFF 1st
1	🇫🇷 S. OGIER	Toyota	12:09.3	-	-
2	🇸🇪 O. SOLBERG	Toyota	12:18.6	+ 09.3	+ 09.3
3	🇬🇧 E. EVANS	Toyota	12:21.4	+ 02.8	+ 12.1
4	🇨🇱 G. MUNSTER	Ford	12:41.5	+ 20.1	+ 32.2
5	🇫🇮 S. PAJARI	Toyota	12:58.7	+ 17.2	+ 49.4
6	🇫🇷 A. FOURMAUX	Hyundai	13:00.8	+ 02.1	+ 51.5
7	🇮🇪 J. ARMSTRONG	Ford	13:09.2	+ 08.4	+ 59.9
8	🇳🇿 H. PADDON	Hyundai	13:17.7	+ 08.5	+ 01:08.4
9	🇯🇵 T. KATSUTA	Toyota	14:05.7	+ 48.0	+ 01:56.4
10	🇧🇪 T. NEUVILLE	Hyundai	15:52.4	+ 01:46.7	+ 03:43.1
11	🇮🇪 J. MCERLEAN	Ford	22:09.3	+ 06:16.9	+ 10:00.0

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## After SS9

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	TOTAL TIME	DIFF PREV	DIFF 1st
1	🇸🇪 O. SOLBERG	toyota	02:11:13.1	-	-
2	🇬🇧 E. EVANS	toyota	02:12:21.5	+ 01:08.4	+ 01:08.4
3	🇫🇷 S. OGIER	toyota	02:12:28.0	+ 06.5	+ 01:14.9
4 <span style="color: green;">▲</span> 1	🇫🇷 A. FOURMAUX	hyundai	02:16:18.3	+ 03:50.3	+ 05:05.2
5 <span style="color: red;">▼</span> 1	🇧🇪 T. NEUVILLE	hyundai	02:17:18.4	+ 01:00.1	+ 06:05.3
6	🇮🇪 J. ARMSTRONG	ford	02:18:31.9	+ 01:13.5	+ 07:18.8
7	🇬🇧 H. PADDON	hyundai	02:18:55.2	+ 23.3	+ 07:42.1
8 <span style="color: green;">▲</span> 1	🇧🇪 G. MUNSTER	ford	02:20:31.0	+ 01:35.8	+ 09:17.9
9 <span style="color: red;">▼</span> 1	🇯🇵 T. KATSUTA	toyota	02:21:13.9	+ 42.9	+ 10:00.8
10	🇫🇮 S. PAJARI	toyota	02:35:57.1	+ 14:43.2	+ 24:44.0
11	🇮🇪 J. MCERLEAN	ford	02:47:10.9	+ 11:13.8	+ 35:57.8

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