



## SS4 : LABOREL / CHAUVAC-LAUX-MONTAUX 1

Date :	23.01.2026		
Day :	2	Flash N° :	6
Special Stage :	4	Distance :	17,95 km
Weather :	2°C – Rain and Fog		
Road conditions :	Muddy, black ice, snow on the top of the col, dirty cuts. Low clouds around km 2. Final two splits are clean asphalt, but some patches of ice are present.		

### SS4: Solberg dominates Laborel

The Oliver Solberg show continued on Friday morning, with the Swedish driver in his Gazoo Racing Toyota Yaris extending his lead over his main rivals by winning SS4, ably assisted by his co-driver Elliott Edmondson. It was on the famous Laborel stage that marked the entry of the 94<sup>th</sup> Monte Carlo Rally in the Drôme region.

On this 17.95 km stage between Laborel and Chauvac-Laoux-Montaux, which included a long, very slippery downhill section where some competitors drove slowly to avoid making mistakes, Solberg set a time 19.1 seconds faster than that of Thierry Neuville and Martin Wydaeghe (Hyundai i20), as the Belgian world champion lacked confidence in his tyres, he confided at the stop point of SS4.

‘It’s a lot of work to keep the car on the road, but the conditions will improve during the day,’ smiled Sébastien Ogier, who was more than 30 seconds behind Solberg but not worried about what was to come. He has so much experience at Monte Carlo, his favourite rally (10 wins, including 9 in the WRC), that he is able to wait patiently. ‘In conditions like these, it’s difficult to judge the quality of our performance, and we have to think a lot...,’ said Elfyn Evans, who is now more than a minute behind his young Swedish teammate, but still second.



With three crews in the top three places, Toyota has perfectly navigated the pitfalls of the first four special stages of this 94<sup>th</sup> edition, with five more special stages to come on the second day. A little further down the overall standings, Neuville, 4<sup>th</sup>, is 1 minute and 45 seconds behind Solberg, followed by Irishman Jon Armstrong (Ford Puma), 5<sup>th</sup> and 2 minutes and 16 seconds behind, on his very first Monte Carlo. Both drivers have set off on a waiting game but could benefit at any moment from an unexpected turn of events among the leading trio...

## Quotes

### 55. MCERLEAN-TREACY

*2 Super Soft, 4 Studs*

"It was crazy. It is always changing, and there is so much black ice and you can't see it. We did a good job. I think it is drying in places towards the end, but you can't take the risk because as soon as you're out there... It is an interesting start. It is studded tyres [you need]. You can put anything else, but the risk is quite high."

### 5. PAJARI-SALMINEN

*4 Studs, 2 Non-Studs*

"It is really a terrible feeling. It is a shame what happened yesterday, so today is all about learning. I was careful on this one and I'll try to improve throughout the day. Yesterday was tricky and so is today."

### 1. OGIER-LANDAIS

*4 Studs, 2 Non-Studs*

"I don't know, there are faster cars coming behind and [road] conditions will improve. That was a tricky stage. It's a lot of work to keep the car on the road, that's for sure."

### 33. EVANS-MARTIN

*4 Studs, 2 Non-Studs*

"It's very difficult to know how you're doing. I felt fast in some places but it's so difficult. Trying to use our head as much as we can but it is very hard to judge the pace."

### 11. NEUVILLE-WYDAEGHE

*2 Super Soft, 4 Studs*

"I was just a bit careful [toward the end]. The road changed a lot between the gravel crew's passage and ours. It was becoming very dirty as well. Sometimes, the gravel gave us more grip. In many places, it was very dirty. It didn't feel so fast, but it should be ok. The feeling is slightly better, but we still need to find the trust in the tyres. That is the biggest issue."



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

*4 Studs, 2 Non-Studs*

"It's difficult as we expected. It was difficult to know what was coming next. Our approach is just to be a bit on the safe side and be patient. We can go through these stages and see what happens."

### **16. FOURMAUX-CORIA**

*2 Super Soft, 4 Studs*

"The feeling was not here. On my side, I had nothing, no punch. We struggled with the grip and also the balance of the car. I felt very slow all along the stage. It's going to be a long rally."

### **99. SOLBERG-EDMONDSON**

*4 Studs, 2 Non-Studs*

"I am cautious but having fun! The gravel crew did an amazing job in there. Everything was exactly where they said it was, I trusted them 100%! Good job. It's such a tricky and long rally and nothing is safe."

### **13. MUNSTER-LOUKA**

*2 Super Soft, 4 Studs*

"[My arms] are fine. The conditions are unpredictable for sure. Sometimes I was a bit too slow, but we are here and that is what matters. So much better [than last night]."

### **20. PADDON-KENNARD**

*2 Super Soft, 4 Studs*

"There's a lot of tricky spots out there. Again, the gravel crew did a good job, but they went through very early, so there is a lot less ice out there now. Trying to do something and learn as much as we can."

### **95. ARMSTRONG-BYRNE**

*6 Studs*

"I was just trying to be really careful. The conditions were not as icy as we had expected. I just tried to get through and make no mistakes. It was a clean stage, but we had to be careful. [Road] Conditions are tricky, but it was interesting on this one, it was better than what we thought. I could have pushed more."



## Classifications

### SS4

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	STAGE TIME	DIFF PREV	DIFF 1st
1	 O. SOLBERG		13:48.5	-	-
2	 T. NEUVILLE		14:07.6	+ 19.1	+ 19.1
3	 E. EVANS		14:15.0	+ 07.4	+ 26.5
4	 S. OGIER		14:21.3	+ 06.3	+ 32.8
5	 G. MUNSTER		14:23.3	+ 02.0	+ 34.8
6	 A. FOURMAUX		14:23.9	+ 00.6	+ 35.4
7	 J. ARMSTRONG		14:30.1	+ 06.2	+ 41.6
8	 T. KATSUTA		14:38.5	+ 08.4	+ 50.0
9	 H. PADDON		14:48.4	+ 09.9	+ 59.9
10	 S. PAJARI		15:02.8	+ 14.4	+ 01:14.3
11	 J. MCERLEAN		15:05.5	+ 02.7	+ 01:17.0



## After SS4

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	TOTAL TIME	DIFF PREV	DIFF 1st
1	 O. SOLBERG		56:58.8	-	-
2	 E. EVANS		58:09.5	+ 01:10.7	+ 01:10.7
3	 S. OGIER		58:40.2	+ 30.7	+ 01:41.4
4	 T. NEUVILLE		58:43.8	+ 03.6	+ 01:45.0
5	 J. ARMSTRONG		59:14.9	+ 31.1	+ 02:16.1
6	 A. FOURMAUX		59:19.0	+ 04.1	+ 02:20.2
7	 T. KATSUTA		01:00:12.8	+ 53.8	+ 03:14.0
8	 H. PADDON		01:00:53.9	+ 41.1	+ 03:55.1
9	 G. MUNSTER		01:01:22.7	+ 28.8	+ 04:23.9
10	 S. PAJARI		01:18:45.0	+ 17:22.3	+ 21:46.2
11	 J. MCERLEAN		01:18:52.6	+ 07.6	+ 21:53.8

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