



STAGE FLASH

Date: 2019-02-16
Day: Saturday **Distance:** 2,80
Special Stage: SS16
Weather: Sunrise today at 0745hrs, so it's still gloomy out there. We're expecting a clear-ish day with a few clouds, very light winds and a relatively warm high of 4°C.

Road Conditions:

1- Jari-Matti Latvala

We don't care so much of the overall results. We are now trying a little bit of experiment with the car, because everything we could get is from the Powerstage. We did some changes with the car that was not so good and it did not help us. We need to improve on the tighter sections because as long as it's fast and flowing, I'm okay but I struggle on the technical section. Important for the powerstage. We went off the road at Vargåsen and got stuck in the snowbank. I tried to attack a little bit more and it did not work. I could say: «If you're gonna get Bank-robbed, it's better to get everything robbed at the same time».

2- Marcus Grönholm

Today it's been a lot of different things happening for us, but we have been staying on the road. We had big problems with the breaks all day. Since I have not been here in Sweden for a long time, and most of the stages have I never done before, it's difficult. But I think I've made pretty good times during the day, even if I've been first on the road. I'm disappointed but not so much. It's been nice to come back to compete here in Sweden and I have always been getting a nice welcoming here.

3- Kris Meeke.

Maybe I did not have the best position on the road today and maybe I should have been faster yesterday- I did not get quick enough out of the box yesterday. Also today it's been difficult and the second loop of this rally is so different from other rallies. There is not so much more I could do. I tried early today to push a little bit more but I could not get any results. Ogier also helped Lappi by changing road positions and the I decide to back off a bit. Okay, this has been my first snow and ice rally in this car and we did not tested in mild weather, so that's how it is.



4- Sebastien Loeb

It's been difficult day but we were in a good rhythm during the day, but not consistent enough. I lost too much time in the morning but the afternoon was better. We're amongst the only crew that only brought 1 spare today- but that was actually a mistake and confusion, but in the end it worked out fine. Maybe we had more destroyed tyres than the others but it was good anyway. Overall we are pleased with our performance- since we have no notes from last year to compare with, we sort of started from scratch this year.

5- Pontus Tidemand

We are more pleased now than before today. The second loop was much better. I'm really happy and we can not do more with our road position this time. It's going better and faster the later you start to get rid of all dirt on the road. It's so easy to make a mistake – just look at Suninen and Latvala. Tomorrow, our plan is to set some good stage times. On the Likenäs stage it's good because the road position is not so important there. If the temperature stays cold now, it's good for the road conditions.

6- Thierry Neuville

It's a big battle for the podium positions now. I'm really pleased to be in this position because all the guys that we're fighting with, have started behind us. We've pushed like Hell today and I made a small mistake which cost me 5 seconds, but at that level you can easily make some mistake. Last year we were lucky with the jump over Colins Crest (going sideways) but that could have gone the other way. We're going to drive as fast as possible tomorrow and anything could happen. We need to think about the championship and secure a good position here.

7- Sebastien Ogier

It has been difficult to motivate yourself, coming back in Rally2- and to be honest- a little bit boring so we have to try as much as we can. We try all day and it was good to see the performance of the car all day. Not so good to be among the first cars on the road but it was better on the 2nd loop when I was in the middle of the group. I'm going to start first on the powerstage so I don't know how important this is going to be. At least we need to try, you know. I hope that it's getting cold over night so that the stage holds better.

8- Esapekka Lappi

I think we have done a good job today and we're tied second with Andreas. The afternoon was very strong even if Ott «was killing me» on the stages. The morning was okay but we missed the speed, but that came in the afternoon. A little bit pressure on us to be the only Citroen in the top, but I'll try not to think about that too much. We've changed some things on the car for the second loop of stages but then the conditions changed as well- so it looked like me and the car worked better in the afternoon in the ruts. Hope that we're not in trouble tomorrow on the fresh roads. We have to be 100% «on it» from the start.

9- Andreas Mikkelsen

Joined second with Esapekka after a tough day today. It was not so nice to see that the other took seconds after seconds during the day. I also made a mistake that took out the big «chunk» of time from us. It's been an okay day and we stayed away from the biggest problems. The nature of the roads tomorrow should be more icy, being more pure racing and today it was more of staying in the lines all the time. We might struggle in the high speed sections tomorrow but we'll see. We need a car with good precision and hope that some changes will work.



10- Ott Tänak

I'm really pleased to leading the rally with such a big margin. Yesterday we had a tough job to get ourselves in this position and we've been coming thru without issues. WE've had a good rhythm with a very good car and today everything has been working really well. We've been enjoying this so much and now have this big lead – it feels very good. It's very difficult to say which percentage I've been driving on but the conditions has change so many times during the day. This position is the best you could have, so for tomorrow we could control a little bit and we'll see what happen.

It's seems like it's going to be colder tonight and tomorrow so that is good for us. You can't relax but I'll think we could have some good fun tomorrow. Also on the POverstage, but we'll seer what we do tomorrow. No plan for the Powerstage but some points could be good as well.

11- Mads Østberg

It's been a challenging day for us but we're pleased that we are in the lead in WRC2 Pro. For the result, it is going very good but we have had some big challenge with our car and it's performance. We've tried to fight thru it and learn as much as possible. And for sure, this event has become more of an test rally and trying out things than anything else, but this is as it is when you come with an new car for specialized event. Maybe we have not made any progress but we've learn a lot (about the car). We did not have the confidence to jump longer at Colins Crest so we could not charge for the record there – sorry for that....I have to wait 365 days now to try again.

12- Ole Christian Veiby

It's been a difficult day in the forest today-but we're now in the lead in WRC2 category. First loop was very good and we were fastest of all the WRC2 guys but on the second loop we struggle a little bit more also with our tires. We have now some more seconds lead for tomorrow and it's in our hand, but we need to attack also to secure the win here. Jari Huttunen has taken a lot of time on us today, but we'll see what happen tomorrow.

13- Tom Kristensson

It's fantastic that we're now in the lead, but it has not been quite up to me that I'm in this position. To bad for Dennis Rådström but that's part of the game. This could change in this rally. The road condition were better than I've expected it to be. But it's really tough, the conditions are changing all the time, so we have not gotten the best times during the day, but we're in the lead so that's good. We had a good strategi and we have stuck to it AND are going to stick to it. We're going to have fun and see what happen. Stick to the Masterplan.

COMMENTS

(The news from the stage)