



Franche-Comté and timepieces

Traced in a loop around the Doubs and on the Franco-Swiss border, this 2nd stage of the 68th Neige et Glace Rally invited caution. Lurking in the shadows, the ice patches were watching out for the crews as they made their way along the numerous forest tracks. And since the Franche-Comté region cultivates the art of timekeeping, every second was worth its weight in gold over the course of the 300 kilometers covered by the competitors.

Snow and ice as an appetizer. In order to catch everyone cold as soon as they wake up, the first ZR of the day was a self-start at the exit of the closed park. The program included a short ZR in the undergrowth not far from Malbuisson on forest roads still covered in snow and, above all, completely frozen where the studded tires offered a perfect grip and 100% pleasure to the crews.

Stamped by the cattle truck. A bad surprise for the Belgian team formed by Eric Van Peer and Eric Chapa. Second in the 4x4 category, these regulars of the Rallye Neige et Glace were heavily hit by a cattle truck on a bend. If the condition of the BMW 325 IX left no doubt that it had to be abandoned, the crew, transported by ambulance, escaped with more fear than harm. Fracture of the ankle and the wrist for the driver, while the co-driver, certainly shocked, suffered from the sides, following the shock in the harness.

The missed schuss of the leaders. Just before lunch in Maîche, the category leaders thought they would have a good time on a snowy downhill. But an oncoming car for Deflandre/Gully (Porsche n°24), a recalcitrant tractor for Kenis/Vanoverschelde (BMW 325 n°21) and a navigation error for Sanseigne/Fornasier (Fiat Cinquecento n°20) came to mar this beautiful moment in the great white.

Maîche lights up at lunchtime. After an already busy morning, the organizers invited the crews to the Maîche village hall for a copious, tasty and restorative lunch. A stopover under the sun and... in 14°C weather, before setting off again for the afternoon loop, slightly shortened by a ZR... pruned, due to tree felling on the route.

France Bleu at the heart of the rally. As a partner of the Neige et Glace, France Bleu radio offers a great visibility to this 68th Neige et Glace Rally. In addition, the radio station is offering several of its listeners the opportunity to experience the rally from the inside. Taken care of by a member of the organization, the lucky ones will follow the race up close, interposed between the crews during the ZR.

The Subaru takes off in the 4X4. Since their mistake during the first night ZR, on Sunday evening when they left Sochaux, Arnaud and Adeline Euvrard (Subaru Impreza n°1) have been driving on their little cloud. Like their beautiful Japanese car, the title holder team in the category seems unshakeable and, above all, inaccessible to the competition. Second-placed Daniel Georges and Laurent Perquin (BMW 325 IX n°6) are already 131 points behind the leaders, while Nadine Brulant and Philippe Tarbouriech (Mazda 323 4WD n°5) are already 349 points behind.





Van Rompuy in Historic. Van Rompuy and his Porsche 914/6, perfectly guided by Jens Vanoverschelde, won this second stage and took the lead in the provisional general standings. Romuald Sanseigne and Florin Fornasier are trailing the Belgians by only 1.2 points. The Belgians Delhez/Noelanders (Ford Escort n°22) follow at eight points, Deflandre/Gully (Porsche 911 n°24) at 27 units, while Reuter/Bernard, completes the top 5 with one more unit. The unlucky ones of the day are Guino Kenis and Björn Vanoverschelde (BMW 325 n°21), leaders this morning and delayed twice by local vehicles. They plunge in the ranking with a total of 161 points, far away from the race leader.

Tomorrow: marathon in the Jura. A marathon day awaits the crews for this 3rd stage which will take them to the heart of the Jura. On the program: 340 tough kilometers dotted with 13 ZR, which the snow forecast for tonight should make as slippery as possible! After lunch in Arbent, not far from Oyonnax, the return to Malbuisson will be almost in the opposite direction, but on new ZR, passing by the mountains above Saint-Claude.

INTERVIEWS

Arnaud Euvrard (Subaru Imprezza n°1/Fra) : *"As we didn't have the live times, we couldn't calculate more than that. As a result, we remained concentrated until the end. We hope that we will continue to be successful. Because the rally is still very long and the roads are particularly changeable and tricky..."*

Dirk Van Rompuy (Porsche 914/6 n°12/Bel): *"The rally is really beautiful. There is a little bit of snow missing, but we have to be careful because the conditions are very changeable. The organization is perfect and the route is splendid. Our mechanics have a bit of trouble not being able to follow our times live. But it is a choice of the organizer to take us back a few years. We are very happy to win this second stage and take the lead of the rally."*

Romuald Sanseigne (Fiat Cinquecento n°20/Fra) : *"We were very good on this second stage. I'm complaining a bit because I made a navigation mistake at the end of the morning. But you can't want everything. The Belgians are there, and so are we. It's going to be an exciting race!"*

INFO, PHOTOS & RANKINGS :

<http://www.zaniroli.com/rallye-neige-et-glace/live-edition-2023/>

