By Jejje Muhinde;

With a 55 point advantage at the top of the championship standing, the Toyota Gazoo driver Kalle Rovanpera will have to downshift gears to stretch his lead when engines roar during the Safari Rally Kenya this week.

The Toyota Gazoo driver told the World Rally Champion (WRC) the Safari Rally Kenya is going to be a tough challenge this week.

He admitted that last year already they saw a lot of issues, so to open the road and still have a good rally there would be good.

“It’s going to be a tough event,” Rovanperä told WRC.com. “Last year already we saw a lot of issues, so to open the road and still have a good rally there would be good.

“It’s quite a different rally to usual, and it’s maybe not the one you enjoy the most when you are in the car, but of course the scenery is great. It’s a special place and you need to approach it a bit differently too.

“Sardinia was maybe not as strong a rally for us as we wanted it to be, but I’m hoping that in Kenya maybe we will not lose so much time opening the road and we can try to have a good weekend.

“Last year, it was a good rally for us overall; we were just a bit unlucky to get stuck when we did at the end of Friday.

“This year we will try to avoid things like that and tackle the event in a better way, because we see a lot of difficult conditions there and things we don’t normally see in modern rallies,” he added.

Rovanpera is on 120 points, 55 ahead of the closest challenger, Hyundai’s Belgian Thierry Neuville.

A win in the WRC Safari Rally this week will propel the youngster from Fini into serious contention for the world title, especially with semi-retired French veterans – nine-time champion Sebastien Loeb and eight-time winner Sebastien Ogier – not attacking the full circuit.

Tänak Ott will be flagged off in third positions in his Hyundai. The Estonian rally

driver and the 2019 World Rally Champion stands third with 62 points.

The Fin Rovanpera dropped out of last year’s event after his Toyota got stuck in the volcanic soil on the opening leg of the event. Safari rally revs off with a super special shake down on Thursday at Kasarani, Nairobi.