

Young Subaru star Brendan Reeves has finished the first day of the Mt Buller Sprint in ninth place after a steady start on a rain-ravaged day that saw nine cars fail to finish.

Driving his Les Walkden Rallying Subaru Impreza WRX Sti, Reeves and co-driving sister, Rhianon, took a conservative approach to the first stage and will increase their pace over the remaining two days of the tarmac rally.

“The car performed perfectly on the first 16km stage up the mountain,” Reeves commented. “This was my first drive of the car since Rallye Burnie, and my first time competing on wet tarmac, so I took it relatively easy to ensure that we made it into day two.

“We have set the car up slightly differently to the previous event in Tasmania, but it still felt exceptionally fast.

“The conditions made it tough though. There was a lot of shiny tarmac and it was quite hard to know where the grip was going to be, and where you could brake,” Reeves added.

Although Reeves’ time of 10 minutes 14.82 seconds was somewhat off the pace of the leading Subaru, that of Eli Evans, he was still faster than former Mt Buller Sprint winner, Jim Richards, in a Porsche GT3, and former Bathurst winner Tony Longhurst in a similar Subaru.

Television personality Grant Denyer set the fourth quickest time in his Impreza WRX Sti.

Using the 16km tourist road up to the summit of Mt Buller in north east Victoria, the Mt Buller Sprint is an annual event. A further four stages will be run on Sunday, with another four stages concluding the event on Monday.

Mt Buller Sprint – Top 10 placings after Stage 1

1. EVANS / MURPHY 2005 Subaru Impreza WRX 9:40.58
2. HESKIN / DENIESE 2006 Mitsubishi Lancer Evo 10:01.50
3. VANDERSEE / ALLEN 2004 Skelta G-Force 10:01.84
4. DENYER / MOSCATT 2006 Subaru Impreza WRX 10:06.64
5. JONES / SOUTAR-DAWSO 2004 Mitsubishi Lancer Evo 10:07.27
6. BEAUMONT / COLE 2006 Mitsubishi Lancer Evo 10:07.58
7. QUINN / LONG 2005 Mitsubishi Lancer Evo 10:09.66
8. SHEARS / SHEARS 2001 Mitsubishi Lancer Evo 10:13.58
9. REEVES / SMYTH 2007 Subaru Impreza WRX 10:14.82
- 10 LONGHURST / TAYLOR 2007 Subaru Impreza WRX 10:15.07