

Brendan has finished a superb third outright in this year's Targa Wrest Point tarmac rally in Tasmania. Brendan, with his co-driving sister Rhianon Smyth alongside, drove an excellent race in his first ever outing in the Mazda Motorsport RX8 SP.

The two-day rally consisted of seven stages on both Saturday and Sunday, covering over 200 kilometres of competitive driving. Brendan came to grips with the car early on Saturday and quickly set about stamping his mark on the rally. He consistently set top four stage times throughout the first day of competition, setting a fastest stage time and two second-fastest stages times in the process. He ended Leg 1 in third place.

Competition in the Modern Category, in which Brendan was competing, was hot. Tasmanian Jason White in a Lamborghini Gallardo and Matt Close in an Audi TT RS led the field at the end of day one but Brendan was determined just to drive his own race on Leg 2 with a top three finish on the agenda. With high temperatures forecast, the focus was on preserving the RX8's tyres and getting the car home in one piece.

Brendan didn't put a foot wrong all day - he again consistently set top four stage times and by the end of Leg 2 had increased his overall margin to fourth placed Jim Richards, (Porsche GT2 RS), to over a minute.

A delighted Brendan was rapt with the weekend's result and happy to get his 2012 season off to a fine start.

"We've had a fantastic weekend," he said. "The car was great, Rhianon did a great job, as did all the Mazda team. I am really happy to reward their hard work with a podium place.

"The RX8 was a dream to drive," he added. "It ran perfectly all weekend and I really enjoyed driving it. I can't wait for Targa Tasmania in April!"

Brendan's Mazda Motorsport team-mates, Simon and Sue Evans, won the Showroom Category in their Mazda 3 MPS, topping off a great weekend for the team. The next outing for the Mazda Motorsport Team is Targa Tasmania, a six-day event to be held in April.

In the meantime, the focus for Brendan and Rhianon will turn to raising sufficient funds to compete in the 2012 World Rally Championship Academy. With only two weeks until entries for the highly regarded Series have to be lodged, the race is on for the young Aussie team to secure enough sponsorship to again enter the Series. They competed in the WRC Academy in 2011, finishing fifth outright, in a fully-sponsored drive made possible by winning the 2010 Pirelli Star Driver competition. With Brendan's proven ability on both tarmac and gravel events, sponsors are sure to gain plenty of exposure from their association with the young driving star.

Visit [Brendan's Photo Gallery](photosvideos/photo-gallery/2012-targa-wrest-point) to see photos from Targa Wrest Point.

Listen to Brendan's post-event interview [here](audio-files/Brendo-TWP.mp3).