

Brendan and Rhianon have had a mixed start to the National Capital Rally, round one of the 2013 ECB Australian Rally Championship. After winning yesterday's Power Stage, the pair were anxious to jump out of the blocks this morning and continue with their stage winning times.

Despite some trouble with the brakes on SS1, Brendan won the stage by 6.5 seconds. On the second stage of the day, on the loose surface, there was too much front 'bite', making it hard to set the car up into corners with the front tyres locking and unable to turn. Brendan and Rhianon dropped 47 seconds on the stage after an overshoot at a junction and now sit in fifth place. With only a repeat of the same two stages to run in Heat 1, Brendan and Rhianon are hoping for a clean run to work their way back up the leaderboard.

"We think there is a master cylinder jammed, making it difficult to change gears," Brendan said. "We are really happy with our first stage time considering the issues we had."

"The roads are extremely loose and dry and it is hard to feel where the grip is. All the slippery sections that we noted in our recce have gone, so the road conditions are now ideal."

After their mixed morning, the RallySchool.com.au service crew worked hard at the service break to overcome the issues encountered but with the short amount of service time available, it wasn't possible.

Brendan drove smoothly and safely through SS4 (SS3 and SS6 had been cancelled prior to the event starting) and finished with sixth outright stage time.

With one stage to go, the driveshaft broke on the start line of SS5 bringing a sudden end to the day for Brendan and Rhianon meaning they were unable to score any championship points for

Heat 1.

The team will now work to prepare for Sunday's Heat 2 which has another 40 championship points on offer.

"The feeling and set up of the Mazda2 on the slippery roads has been great," Brendan said.

"Tomorrow's stages are to be run in the Kowen Forest with the stages set deep in pine plantations. There will be lots of gravel and sharp rocks and many long straights and squares, so I'm looking forward to having a real crack again tomorrow," he added.

Scott Pedder won Heat 1 of the National Capital Rally ahead of Eli Evans and Tom Wilde.

Heat 2 will consist of seven stages totalling around 90 competitive kilometres.