

In what has been the perfect start to their Australian Rally Championship (ARC) campaign, Brendan Reeves and Rhianon Gelsomino have backed up yesterday's Heat 1 win with victory in Heat 2 today. The pair, driving their RallySchool.com.au Mazda2, fought a tough battle all day at the National Capital Rally with Scott Pedder/Dale Moscatt (Renault Clio), and clinched victory by beating their rivals by 6.6 seconds on the final stage of the day.

Brendan started the first of the day's stages as he hoped to continue, with a 3.3 second win over Pedder. Reigning ARC champion, Eli Evans, was unable to re-join the rally today after breaking the driveshaft on his borrowed Volkswagen Polo yesterday. This meant that the scene was set for a full-on battle for Heat 2 honours between Pedder and Reeves.

Pedder claimed a win on the second stage of the day, but at the lunch break, with four stages completed, and with three of those to his name, Brendan held a slender two second lead.

The final three stages of the day were a real tussle. Brendan won the first by one and a half seconds, but Pedder bounced back on the penultimate stage with a 4.7 second victory, giving him a 1.2 second margin with just one stage to go.

On the morning run of the day's final stage, "Rydgges Lakeside", a 14.14 kilometre test, Brendan had beaten Pedder by 1.2 seconds - the margin he was now in arrears overall. He headed into the final stage of the day with one goal in mind - to claim back the lead, and he did that in style, winning the stage by 6.6 seconds and claiming the Heat win by 5.4 seconds.

After winning the Power Stage on Friday and both Heats of the National Capital Rally, Brendan and Rhianon take maximum points away from the weekend.

"What an awesome feeling it is to be on the top of the podium," a delighted Brendan said.

"We had a fantastic run again today. The battle with Scott (Pedder) was hot and I'm so happy that we were able to nail it on the final stage.

"Once again the Mazda2 ran perfectly and I thank our hard working team for that."

Road conditions today were perfect. Yesterday's rain meant that dust wasn't an issue and apart from a couple of small ruts, the roads held up really well.

Brendan and Rhianon will head into round 2 of the Australian Rally Championship, the QUIT Forest Rally in Busselton, from April 4 to 6, as Championship leaders.

Results, Heat 2, National Capital Rally, round 1 Australian Rally Championship

1. Reeves/Gelsomino, Mazda2, 50:03.8
2. Pedder/Moscatt, Renault Clio, +05.4
3. Coppin/Batten, Citroen DS3, +1:48.8
4. Roe/Searcy, Ford Focus, +4:56.4
5. Patton/Webb, Volkswagen Polo. +10:49.3

2014 ECB Australian Rally Championship Points After Round 1

****Provisional****

Reeves/Gelsomino, Mazda2, 86
Pedder/Moscatt, Renault Clio, 61
Coppin/Batten, Citroen DS3, 60
Patton/Webb, VW Polo, 42
Mackenzie/Mackenzie, Ford Fiesta ST, 34
Roe/Searcy, Ford Focus, 26
Sullens/Barkley, Citroen DS3, 22
Evans/Weston, VW Polo, 3
Boaden/Cheers, VW Polo, 0
Sims/Sims, Peugeot 207, 0