

In another day shortened by stage cancellations, Victorian rally duo Brendan Reeves and Rhianon Gelsomino have finished fifth after losing a wheel in today's final Heat of Scouts Rally SA.

The pair went into round four of the ECB Australian Rally Championship (ARC) with a sixteen point lead over main rivals Scott Pedder and Dale Moscatt (Renault Clio) but a frustrating weekend means Pedder now has a slight lead in the championship race.

Heat 1 of the event consisted of three stages and was held in treacherous conditions with heavy rain falling around Gawler, the rally's base. Despite losing the use of the windscreen wipers on their rallyschool.com.au Mazda2, Reeves and Gelsomino finished the heat just 12.5 seconds in arrears of Pedder.

Heat 2 on Saturday promised twelve stages and the chance for Reeves to take some vital championship points but stage cancellations due to accidents and impassable roads (a result of the heavy rain), reduced the competition to just nine stages (three of which were short 1.05 kilometre runs around the Gawler Showgrounds).

Reeves struggled with battery issues and the balance on his car on the opening stages but some set-up changes during the service breaks renewed his confidence and he was soon back on the pace and matching Pedder's times, beating the rally leader on the sixth stage of the day . Just as he hit his rhythm, though, the three afternoon stages were cancelled which left only the short Super Special Stages around Gawler Showgrounds to run. Reeves won two of the three stages, taking his tally of stage wins for the day to three and was confident of a good run heading into Heat 3.

Sunday's Heat 3 was a tight battle between Reeves and Pedder with less than five seconds splitting the pair on the opening three stages and Pedder held a 12.4 second lead going into the 13.54 kilometre fourth stage.

Reeves' frustrating weekend quickly became more disappointing when he lost a wheel during the stage but he was able to push on and make it back to service where the rallyschool.com.au team changed the rear beam. The Mazda2 was then able to continue, but the time lost had pushed the team back from second to fifth place.

After repairs were made to the car, Reeves was immediately back on the pace, aiming to claw back the time lost on the remaining stages. The cancellation of two stages and the short distance of the other two meant it was impossible to improve his outright position despite taking two stage wins, and he finished the day in fifth place.

With their second place in Heats 1 and 2 and fifth place in Heat 3, Reeves and Gelsomino secured second overall for the rally.

The next round of the ECB Australian Rally Championship is Coates Hire Rally Australia to be held around Coffs Harbour from September 11 to 14. It is an event in which Reeves has had success in the past and one he is looking forward to returning to with the aim of taking back the Championship lead.

Scouts Rally SA Heat 3 results

1. Pedder/Moscatt, (Renault Clio);
2. Sullens/Barkley, (Citroen DS3), +1:46.1;
3. Roe/Glenney, (Ford Focus), +2:05.4
4. Boaden/Cheers, (Volkswagen Polo Vivo), +2:37.3
5. Reeves/Gelsomino, (Mazda2), +3:23.8

Overall results

1. Pedder/Moscatt
2. Reeves/Gelsomino
3. Coppin/Batten (Citroen DS3)