

Brendan Reeves will once again play an important role for Hyundai Motorsport in this weekend's round of the World Rally Championship (WRC) in Germany.

The Australian is filling the role of gravel crew driver for WRC star Hayden Paddon on the third tarmac event of the year.

Reeves will be joined by Paddon's former co-driver, John Kennard, after Kennard retired from the WRC mid-season. Reeves' former co-driver in the gravel crew car, Sebastian Marshall, has now stepped up to call the pace notes for Paddon.

Rally Germany is a unique event and the gravel crew plays an important role. They drive the rally stages prior to the competitors and report back to the teams on how road conditions have changed since the initial reconnaissance of the course was completed.

With rain expected both before and during the event, mud will be thrown onto the roads and the driving lines noted in each crew's notes will change. It is the job of the gravel crew to report any changes to the road conditions and driving lines back to their team before the day's stages begin so that pace notes can be updated and tyre choices can be reviewed.

As a former gravel crew team member, Marshall knows just how important the role is.

"Rallye Deutschland is incomparable on the WRC circuit," he said. "There's a different style and rhythm to each day of action; the Mosel vineyards, Baumholder Military Range and Saarland farmland stages.

"The weather can be very varied and unpredictable in this region so it's important to liaise well with our safety crew to get the latest road condition information. We'll be in good hands with some familiar faces in Brendan Reeves and John Kennard fulfilling this role for us."

Reeves knows exactly what to expect of the road and weather conditions this weekend having competed at Rally Germany on two occasions. He contested the event in both 2011 and 2012 as part of the WRC Academy and understands the challenges that Paddon and Marshall will face this weekend.

Paddon, too, is under no illusions. He is the first to admit that tarmac is not his preferred rally surface and is realistic with his expectations this weekend.

“The long-term goal is not necessarily to be the fastest tarmac driver - it’s about being competitive and collecting strong points.

“You will not win a 13-round championship based on three tarmac rallies, but it is important you don’t surrender too many points,” he said.

Paddon and Marshall recently contested two non-WRC tarmac rallies in a Hyundai R5 to add to their experience on the surface. Whilst considerably different to the WRC car in which he’ll compete this weekend, more time behind the wheel on tarmac has given Paddon increased confidence.

Rally Germany will be held over four days, starting on Thursday, 17 August. Day one features a stage in the centre of Saarbrücken.

On Friday, teams will tackle two repeated vineyard stages overlooking the Mosel River, and a new super special stage at Wadern-Weiskirchen which will be run three times.

Saturday features the tricky Baumholder military roads whilst Sunday's stages are a mix of fast country roads near the border with Luxembourg and France and closer to rally base, Bostalsee.

In total, crews will complete 21 stages covering a total competitive distance of 311 kilometres.