

Brendan Reeves has successfully defended his title at the Mahindra Goldrush Rally Coromandel, held in New Zealand's north island, today.

Reeves and co-driver Ben Searcy joined Force Motorsport for the event, driving the team's new Mazda 2 AP4.

The rally, round 4 of the New Zealand Rally Championship (NZRC), attracted a large field of 56 crews, including New Zealand's World Rally Championship driver, Hayden Paddon, and reigning NZRC champion David Holder and current series leader, Matt Summerfield.

Reeves started the event in great fashion, winning the opening stage by 4.1 seconds, however a spin on stage two cost he and Searcy over a minute and plunged them down the leaderboard.

The pair were quickly back on track, though, and moved back up to second place on the following stage after another blistering stage time. On stage 4, a re-run of stage 2 where Reeves had spun earlier, Paddon left the road and despite there being no damage to his Hyundai i20 AP4+, he was unable to continue in the rally. Paddon and co-driver John Kennard, did complete a 'demonstration' run on the day's final stage.

With his main rival sidelined, Reeves was able to ease off the pace for the remaining three stages, ensuring he completed back-to-back wins at Coromandel.

"We've had a great day and are really happy to have made it two wins from two starts for Force Motorsport," Reeves said. "It's a real shame that Hayden wasn't able to continue after stage four as we would have had a great battle, but that's how rallying goes some times.

"The car was brilliant today. Force Motorsport have built a fantastic rally car in the Mazda 2 AP4 and it was great to be part of their team again today.

"Congratulations to team owner, Andrew Hawkeswood, on his second place today in the team's Mazda 2 AP4+."

Rally Coromandel was only Searcy's second time calling the pace notes for Reeves and once again the pair worked well together.

Reeves thanked Searcy for another fantastic job today and also wanted to acknowledge the supporters that helped him get to the event. A number of supporters and small businesses pledged money to have their names included on the Mazda 2, and Reeves was humbled by

their support.

Results Mahindra Goldrush Rally Coromandel

1. B. Reeves/B. Searcy, Mazda 2 AP4, 1:28:18.3
2. A. Hawkeswood/J. Cress, Mazda 2 AP4+, +1:15.3
3. B. Hunt/T. Rawstrom, Subaru WRX Sti, +1:44.5
4. P. Campbell/R. Hudson, Mitsubishi Lancer EVO 9, +2:27.5
5. A. Bligh/R. Chalmers, Mitsubishi Lancer EVO8, +2:42.3