

A promising start on day one of the Rally of Otago ended in disappointment for Australian pair Brendan Reeves and Rhianon Gelsomino when they were forced to retire whilst leading the New Zealand Rally Championship component of the event.

Reeves and Gelsomino, driving the Lock and Load Transport Stokes Motorsport Ford Fiesta AP4, started the day full of confidence and blasted out of the blocks to set equal fastest stage time with Dylan Turner on the day's opening test.

On the day's second stage, the 34.29 kilometre Berwick 1, Reeves beat Turner by more than 17 seconds, despite driving cautiously to protect a broken exhaust.

Crews then headed to the first service of the day where the Stokes Motorsport team replaced a steering arm and fitted new tyres to the car.

Reeves was again quickest on SS3, was second fastest on SS4 Kuri Bush, and then won SS5 to take a 33-second lead into the next service break.



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