

Australians Brendan Reeves and Rhianon Smyth have had a mixed first day to Wales Rally GB, the final round of the 2011 FIA World Rally Championship Academy.

Driving their Ford Fiesta R2, the Victorians started the event brilliantly, winning the first tarmac stage by 1.1 second from local driver Craig Breen, and then backing that up with second quickest time on the repeat of the 4.74km Great Orme stage.

But once the event got into the forests on the famous 15.77km Clocaenog stage, the pair dropped back down the leader board in wet and muddy conditions that were made even more treacherous in the dark.

Reeves was 10th on the stage, and finished the day in eighth place, 1m26.2s behind Breen.

"We really enjoyed the tarmac stages, although it was very greasy," Reeves said at the end of the day.

"However, stage three was very, very wet and slippery. It was foggy in places as well, so it wasn't the best finish to the day."

Day two of Wales Rally GB will see the FIA WRC Academy drivers take on eight tough stages totalling a competitive distance of 116.18 kilometres, giving Reeves plenty of distance to move back up the leader board.