

Brendan and Rhianon have had a great start to the opening round of the 2012 WRC Academy season, winning the first stage and finishing the day in second place, just 0.5 seconds off the lead. The Aussie duo started their WRC season on a high, winning the Super Special Stage in Lisbon in front of a huge crowd. Crews then headed 200km for the first of three gravel stages. Brendan drove consistently, setting good stage times, and is really happy with his position at the end of Day One.

"We've had a good day," Brendan said. "There was no dust tonight like we all thought there might be. SS2 was actually a bit damp and slippery over the rocky surface but SS3 was dry.

"We made some small mistakes on SS4 with some late braking and slowing at the first finish boards, but overall we are very happy with our day.

"The car was great, and it was fantastic to be back competing in the WRC again," he added.

Day two of Rally Portugal consists of three stages each run twice. The rocky roads are expected to make conditions tough, particularly on the second pass during the afternoon.

See photos from Day 1 of Rally Portugal in [Brendan's Photo Gallery](#) .