

The Australian brother-sister rally pairing of Brendan Reeves and Rhianon Gelsomino have won the final round of the 2013 Rally America Series and in doing so have clinched the 2WD Championship.

Round seven of the Rally America series was the Lake Superior Performance Rally (LSPR) held in Michigan and it proved to be the biggest test of the season for Brendan. He and Rhianon didn't contest the first two rounds of the seven round series, but after securing a drive with Team O'Neil Rally, they have contested every rally since, winning each of the four previous events they have entered. This was an incredible effort given that the pair had never competed in America before this year.

Coming in to this weekend's rally, Brendan was just three points adrift of Canadian Andrew Comrie-Picard in the championship standings and he needed to win the rally or finish second, with Comrie-Picard finishing lower than him, to take home the 2013 Rally America 2WD title.

The LSPR was held over two days and consisted of 17 stages and around 93 miles of competitive driving. Rally organisers were forced to amend the route earlier in the week due to the US government shut-down which meant that the six different stages used were each run multiple times.

Brendan held the balance of power on day 1 of the event despite temporarily losing the lead to Comrie-Picard when a rock jammed between the rim and brake caliper in a rear wheel of his Team O'Neil Ford Fiesta R2. This slowed the Australian down but once the rock had been dislodged, Brendan again charged on and held a 13.4 second lead at the overnight break.

Day 2 was almost a carbon copy of the first day. Brendan was dominant early and held a 12.2

second lead half way through the day's stages but on stage 14 he was again slowed when another rock jammed the rear wheel and Comrie-Picard took the lead.

With just the final stage of the rally to go, Brendan and Rhianon were three seconds behind their rival and knew it was now or never. They charged through the stage, beating Comrie-Picard by nine seconds and taking the rally win by 6.6 seconds. In doing so, not only did they make it five wins from five starts in the US, they also claimed the 2013 Rally America 2WD Championship.

"It's an awesome feeling to have won the Rally America 2WD title," Brendan said. "This weekend was a real battle with ACP and it feels so good to have come out on top.

"A huge thanks go to Team O'Neil Rally for preparing an amazing car. The Fiesta has been brilliant throughout the championship and it has been fantastic to be part of the team.

"Rhianon and I would also like to thank all our supporters and sponsors - without them, the opportunity to rally in America wouldn't have been possible, and winning the title is a great way to thank everyone for their support."

Brendan and Rhianon's next event is the final round of the 2013 Australian Rally Championship, Rally Victoria, which will be based in Warragul from November 15.