

Australian Rally Championship leader, Brendan Reeves, heads into this weekend's Rally of Queensland with a 34 point advantage, and will be hoping to extend that lead with a solid performance.

The Mazda2 driver has won the opening two rounds of the national championship, and a successful test session ahead of round three has the Victorian in a confident mood ahead of the challenging Sunshine Coast event.

Together with his co-driving sister, Rhianon Gelsomino, Reeves completed just six runs of the 4.5 kilometre test stage on Wednesday, happy with the set-up of his front-wheel drive rocket.

"The test stage was quite rough, and certainly rougher than we expect the rally to be," Reeves said.

"The car felt really good from the first run, so we didn't feel that doing more runs than necessary was going to prove beneficial at all.

"Because the car has been a lot more reliable this year than in 2013, we've already got some great data from previous events, so we come into this rally with everything working well."

Other than setting the ride height higher for Queensland's rougher roads, the Mazda2 will appear in pretty much the same specification as it did in the previous round in Western Australia.

The engine spec is the same, although a new exhaust system means the car will sound a little different, with a higher pitched exhaust note.

Despite his lead in the championship, Reeves knows that being consistent over the event's two

days will be critical in coming away from Queensland with an extended lead.

“Firstly, we know that consistency is the key to scoring points,” Reeves added.

“This event can be a car breaker, and with 20 points on offer for each heat, and 40 points for the overall winner, getting to the finish on both days will be important.

“Of course we want to win both heats, but winning overall here is the key, and that’s what our aim will be.”

This year’s Rally of Queensland route will be similar to last year’s, with 16 competitive stages and a total competitive distance of 237 kilometres.

As he challenges for his first Australian Rally Championship title, Reeves will drive with a full-face helmet for the first time, a decision brought about by Rhianon’s recent experiences in a round of the Rally America series.

“Rhi was involved in an incident where their car caught fire, and wearing a full-face helmet helped to protect her from serious burns,” Reeves said. “It’s for that reason that I’ve got a new lightweight Stilo helmet that felt really good during our test.

“I wore a full-face helmet when I was racing go-karts, and while they’re a bit hotter to wear, I’m sure I’ll get used to it quickly. The extra safety and piece of mind will be important, as well.”

The Rally of Queensland Power Stage kicks off on Friday morning in the forests north of Brisbane, before the ceremonial start at Kings Beach in Caloundra on Friday night.

The rally action gets underway on Saturday morning in the forests around Imbil and Kenilworth,

and continues through to Sunday afternoon, where the winner will be crowned.