

 Following today's first heat of the Tasmanian Tarmac Challenge (TTC), Brendan Reeves in his Mazda3 MPS secured a comfortable lead in the event's showroom competition and is officially the fastest two-wheel-drive car in the field.

Reeves and co-driver Rhianon Smyth stormed their way through today's six wet and slippery competition stages. The brother and sister duo will start tomorrow's second and final heat in eighth position overall.

Demonstrating the Mazda3 MPS's impressive rally capabilities, only highly-modified, four-wheel-drive rally cars precede it in overall standings.

Young gun Reeves chose to drive the 190kW hot-hatch conservatively in today's 87km heat.

“It was so slippery out there, the rain was just horrendous,” said 20-year-old Reeves. “Wet conditions are not ideal when driving a new car competitively for the first time - but the Mazda3 MPS is up to the challenge, and so am I.

“We have a pretty comfortable lead in the showroom competition which is great. So for us it's about trying to be as competitive as we can and move up the overall standings.”

Mazda Motorsport chief Allan Horsley was impressed by his young driver's performance under today's testing conditions.

“Brendan displayed maturity beyond his years today,” said Horsley. “He's a very capable driver and now that he's had competition experience in the Mazda3 MPS, I am confident he will up the ante even more tomorrow.”

The 2008 TTC concludes tomorrow following another 87km heat comprising six competition stages.

For results over the weekend visit www.tarmacchallenge.com

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