

Iron Gate (triple caution) medium right onto mainline, top speed briefly, then shallow left over slight crest, another, then right, rough, across bridge (carefully). Gain back some speed for long hairpin left uphill into half-mile sweeping right to sharp left (sideways) and quarter-mile run to medium right at the Flying Finish (sideways again!).

Top average speed through this very technical thrill ride was 54.4 mph by Faust. Dayton I was a bit late starting, due to crew setup concerns, the storm causing poor radio communication on opposite sides of a ridge, and a late arriving E-Crew. Pastrana-Edstrom were having a little too much fun and rolled, at about the two-mile double left, in sight of spectators, with the 199 and E-Crews blocking the stage, causing another delay. The crew was OK and stayed in place to spectate for the rest of the event (autograph session?).

Nahwatzel is the long stage. Olympus 2007 configuration was 26.29 miles. Nahwatzel has narrow two-track, smooth graded narrow twists, four-lane mainline and everything in between.

At Stage Start 12, a long straight stretch leads to easy right, then 90-left straight, 90-right longer straight, 90-left straight. Then the smooth two-lane sweeping and twisting for 3 miles, into a rough acute-left dropping across a shallow valley where you might see the car ahead before a 90-right starting to climb again, 90-left at the video crew, twisting now through third-growth timber becoming very tight and in spots very rough and rutted (at least three cars disabled due to this).

From this point the route is a two-track roller coaster between new-growth with minor twists before a 90-left onto the big mainline straight. Approaching spectators at 9.38 miles, past speeds have ranged from the WRC-caliber 134 mph to a Geo Metro's "60, and still accelerating." Even the best Scandinavian Flick for this acute right turn will be interrupted by a very rough berm at the transition, throwing lots of gravel for the crowd.

A three-quarter-mile straight is smooth and rolling, then a 90-left, twisting along the tree line, acute-right, rise and fall, 90-left, easy crests and dips to Pee Corner, the triple-caution iron gates for acute-right, threading the needle and dropping right with exposure and tall trees (and this is only half way through!). The next 6 miles are relatively smooth with some sharp crests with



Carl Decker and Adam Craig were the first two-wheel drive car, Group 2 class winners in the John Nagel Rally in a 1995 Subaru Impreza. They finished seventh overall in the regional rallies.

turns following, and a nice smooth right-left-right slalom, before turning onto the mainline again, briefly.

A rough acute-left marks the beginning of yet another character of Nahwatzel — 1.3 miles of flat and twisting gravel, then right onto "California Road" for a gradual 2-mile climb to a very steep drop, back into the valley through several hairpins and an acute-left before the final 2-mile run to Flying Finish. If everything went well, this was the make-or-break stage of the event. Fast national time was 25:19.6 (62.28 mph) by Lagemann-Williams; top regional time of 28:48.8 by Hintz-Dillon. Nahwatzel I saw one national retirement, five regional retirements.

Teams returned to Shelton for service, refuel and regroup, before returning to Dayton for SS13.

Dayton II was now 50 minutes late. The rains had driven off a few of the spectators, but those remaining were enthusiastic. Most of the dips now had water hazards, and small rivulets marked the tire track for the now 52-car field. Pinker-Durant at 10:46.8 put nearly 10 seconds on Lagemann, just to keep it interesting. Hintz-Dillon were in their groove now with top time again. Dayton II claimed one national and one regional car.

(On one of the few stages where Car 00 could get a clean run, with good timing controls at both ends, it took 14:02.2,

versus Pinker's 10:46, but beating at least 13 cars, including a stop-n-go to check on Pastrana. Let's cage that puppy and get back into it!)

SS14 was BioSolids Boulevard. This 3.71-mile stage is smooth but narrow, with enough hairpins to offset the long sweepers. A short rise from stage start levels out through a couple of flat intersections before falling through a medium right into loooong sweeper left. Continuing to fall gradually along the valley west of Shelton, then climbing again over crests and the final drop into Flying Finish and a narrow overgrown control zone. Lagemann 4:22; Hintz 4:48.

Time for another service, refuel and regroup in Shelton, before the final stage of the weekend.

SS15, Nahwatzel II, brought no further DNF cars despite the deluge, some were VERY late and very damaged — lots of dents, scrapes and missing bumpers. Nearly every corner now had puddles or lakes in the apex. Car 243 sat lonely at mile 5.05 awaiting a trailer. One section at 6.74 had water running across the stage. The course opening "00" had to reset nearly all the banner tape as the weight of the rain pulled it down. The arrows and numbers had blown away at 7.19, with "00" going back to reset the signage, warning of the washed out roadbed.

Day One PGT winner Brian Svendin and Ben Bradley in the 2001 Subaru