

OLYMPUS 2007



The Gene Nielsen Stages of the Olympus International Rally on May 20 were wet and muddy. Todd Hartmann and Shawn Callahan were the first two-wheel drive finishers, first in Group 2 class, in the 1992 Intrax Volkswagen Golf. On the cover, Dave Hintz and John Dillon in the Hintz Subaru WRX finished first overall in the John Nagel Rally on May 19. They were first again among regional competitors in the rain-soaked Gene Nielsen Stages on May 20.

Rallyists endure dust, rain, rocks and mud on the back roads around Shelton

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SHELTON — The Pacific Rally Group and Rally America presented Olympus International Rally 2007 May 18-20. The national event was accompanied by two regional rallies: The John Nagel Dryad Quest Rally and the Gene Nielson Shitepoke Stages.

Olympus was Round Four of the RA schedule and a qualifying event for X-Games 2007. In 1973, Olympus was part of the first United States Stage Rally Championship. (This writer finished 19th in that event.)

The weekend festivities began with Friday's "Recce Lite." Full reconnaissance (recce) was reduced to "Notes Familiarization Pass," giving crews a chance to see the stage roads, slowly, and make notes of how the Jemba notes, or the Route Book, compared to their own interpretation of every turn, rut and hole on the course. About half of the field signed up for the NFP and were split roughly in half again to keep the train moving smoothly.

One group saw Sunday stages first, then Saturday. The second group saw the route essentially in run order. Cars were let onto the stages at 10-second intervals in an attempt to get the NFP completed in a timely manner. One problem: dust! The unexpectedly dry

weather brought visibility to zero in some areas, with nary a breeze to clear the way. As a result, crews on Jemba or Route Books, couldn't get a view of the road character without stopping (for safety as well) until the dust settled a bit and they could see to proceed. The NFP returned to headquarters at the Little Creek Casino Resort a bit later than the scheduled 1700 hrs.

Saturday morning the competitors were on display at the Capitol Campus in Olympia — skies overcast, occasional drizzle — just enough moisture to keep the dust at bay. Sixty-five cars took the start: 29 Subaru, four Mitsubishi EVO, then the alphabet soup of Acura, Audi, BMW, Dodge, Ford, Honda, Mazda, Mitsubishi Eclipse, Nissan, Plymouth,