

## WINNERS OF THE RALLYSPRINT



### CANANDAIGUA, NY FAMILY MEMBERS WIN WASTE MANAGEMENT WINTER RALLYSPRINT ON FEB. 16

WELLSBORO, PA – Kurt Thiel, a veteran performance rally driver and his first-time co-driver and niece Anna Thiel won the 9th Annual Waste Management Winter RallySprint, a cold, icy event held on Saturday, Feb. 16 in North Central Pennsylvania. This rally is sanctioned by the Sports Car Club of America.

In their 2002 Subaru Impreza, the Thiels of Canandaigua, New York defeated seven other entrants. By more than four minutes, they took first place overall and first in the four-wheel drive under 2.5 liters R4U class.

Thiel, who has competed mostly in two-wheel drive vehicles during his 25-year rally career, recently picked up the all-wheel drive 2002 Subaru and thought it might be a good car to give his niece Anna co-driving experience. Saturday's victory was really satisfying for them.

"Anna called a flawless event and I managed to keep the car on the icy Waste Management roads, so we ran six mistake-free stages to win," he said. "This was lots of fun.

Six of the eight entrants who started the event finished the 42-mile rally held on the closed course on Waste Management property in Duncan Township, near Wellsboro.

Taking second overall and first in the 2WD under 2.5 liter R2U class was the 1985 BMW 318i of Josh Hickey of Burke, Virginia and Jim Spoth of Frederick, Maryland. This was a repeat victory for Hickey and Spoth who finished second overall and first in the R2U class last year.

Third overall and first in the 2WD over 2.5 liter R2O class was the husband and wife team of Chris and Sara Nonack of Quakertown, Pa. in a 1985 Merkur XR4Ti.

Alan Edwards of Carnegie, Pa. and Daniel Baker of Port Allegany, Pa. in their 2003 Dodge Neon finished fourth overall and second in the R2U class. In 2018, they finished third overall and second in the R2U class.

Finishing fifth overall and third in the R2U class in his 2011 Ford Fiesta was local racer Derek James of Westfield, Pa. He took advantage of the rules for this demonstration rally by taking three different co-drivers on the stages with him, helping to spread goodwill about rallying to a new audience. James is a full-time crew member for a Florida-based IndyCar team. Next month, he is heading to St. Petersburg to work the season opener.

Christopher Bersheim of Lancaster, Pa. and co-driver Matthew DeVirgilis of South Lebanon, Pa. were sixth overall and fourth in the R2U class in their 1989 Nissan 240SX.

Last year, Matthew Chmielewski of Harvey's Lake, Pa. and co-driver Pete Sandy of Moosic, Pa. finished first overall and first in the 4WD over 2.5 liter R4O class in their 2002 Subaru Impreza WRX despite losing all but third gear. Luck wasn't with them this year. They crashed their Subaru on stage 1 and after completing stages 1 and 2 and the beginning of stage 3 realized the crash had resulted in a broken front axle. They did not finish.

After completing three of the six stages in their 1991 BMW 325, transmission problems on stage 4 ended the contest for driver Oscar Simsek of Brooklyn, New York and co-driver Alp Seyhan of Fredericksburg, Virginia. They were in the R2U class.

The Wellsboro and Rochester, New York-based organizing committee are now focusing on the 2019 Waste Management Susquehannock Trail Performance Rally, which will take place in Wellsboro on new dates, Friday and Saturday, Sept. 13 and 14. See [www.stpr.org](http://www.stpr.org) for details.

For complete rally results from this weekend, go to [www.wmwr.info](http://www.wmwr.info).