

#iMfast: ENGINEERING FLAT OUT

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Detroit Lakes, Minn. (August 30, 2016) – Engineers from Toyota’s North American R&D headquarters in Michigan took to the Minnesota wilderness last weekend in a nearly-stock Corolla iM and they left having earned their first-ever podium finish.

This was the team's first appearance in Rally America's regional rally held during the Ojibwe Forests Rally since the team returned to stage rally in 2014. It was also the second race Rally America appearance for the iM. The team first ran the Spring Green hatchback at the Susquehannock Performance Rally (STPR) in June, but that race was more of an experiment than a competition.

"STPR was a shake-down for the iM" said Toyota body design engineer and driver Brian Thurgate at STPR. "We ran it completely stock to determine what it would take to get a car designed and engineered for the street to be competitive on the rally stage."

Crew Chief and Driver/Co-Driver Kyle Steinkamp took the lessons learned from STPR and develop improved suspension components. "The low ground clearance of the iM is great on the street and does what it is engineered to do. But we're racing at high speed on roads and trails more suited for Tacomas and 4Runners." Steinkamp, who is a Toyota chassis engineer, continued "We were able to use components from other Toyota models to beef up the suspension and the result was a much better handling rally car."

Other lessons learned lead the team to add plating to the underside of the car. "The iM is a street car, but at times we're running it on terrain where most people wouldn't drive their SUV's." Said Driver/Co-Driver Colin Ravenscroft. "At STPR", he continued, "we had issues with damage to the exhaust and other components from rocks and rough landings after jumps. With the changes we made after STPR, we didn't have any of those issues at Ojibwe."

The team, made up entirely of full-time Toyota engineers and associates, will wrap up the 2016 Rally America season this October in Houghton, Michigan at the Lake Superior Performance Rally (LSPR) along with, and most likely well behind, the Toyota Rally Rav4 of Ryan Millen.