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Rapid Rainier: Elson and Carter Break Mount Rainier Speed Record



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Written by: Betsy Manero

After five years, the standing speed record for a car-to-car trip on Washington’s Mount Rainier (14,411 ft.) has been broken. On Monday, May 20, skimo racers Nick Elson and Eric Carter made the round trip in four hours, 19 minutes and 12 seconds, more than 20 minutes faster than the previous record.

Stano Faban was attempting the record with Elson and Carter, but turned around at Camp Muir (10,080 ft.). And while Faban didn’t make the record, he was still a major part of the expedition, Carter says. “It really was a team effort,” he adds. “Nick and I were able to work together to keep moving, and Stano provided enormous support and experience to get us up faster.”

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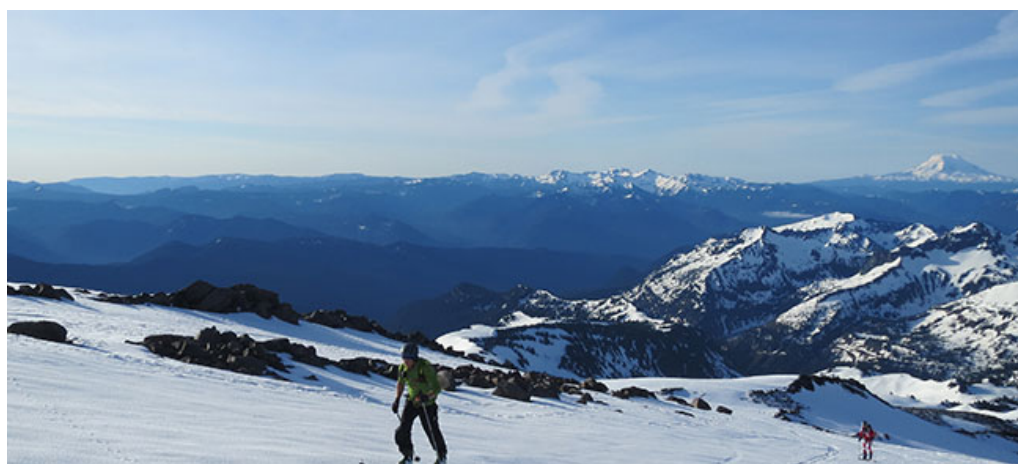
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Elson (left) and Faban (right) climbing the Muir Snowfields with Mount Adams behind. [Photo] Eric Carter

What Carter called “perfect conditions” allowed he and Elson to fly up the popular Disappointment Cleaver route. Gaining 9,000 vertical feet over eight miles, Disappointment Cleaver follows the Muir Snowfields before crossing the Emmons Glacier into the crater rim and tapping out on the summit. “The first half of it is relatively low angle so you can ski pretty much that whole part,” Carter says. “Then after that there a ski track set by the guides bringing clients up so that we pretty easy to follow.”



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Carter (left) and Elson (right) at the summit, three and a half hours into their record. [Photo] Eric Carter

While all previous Rainier speed records had been done on foot by runners, Elson and Carter are the first skiers to hold the record. Willie Benegas set the previous record on September 8, 2008 in a time of 4:40:59. “Now this will get some skimo guys to get out and go [for the speed record],” Carter says, “and then maybe a bit of competition from the runners to try and take it back.”



Nick Elson, Stano Faban and Eric Carter after their big day on Rainier. [Photo] Eric Carter

Check out the data from Carter and Elson’s four-hour, 9,000-foot ski here. connect.garmin.com/activity

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