

NY subway fans set record for riding whole system

Thu Aug 24, 2006 4:51pm ET

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Two men emerged from a subway train just before sunrise on Thursday dazed, confused and claiming a record for mastering New York's subway system.

Matt Green and Don Badaczewski, two friends from college, traversed the entire subway system in just over 24 hours, shaving more than an hour off the previous record.

Green, 26, and Badaczewski, 24, went without sleep during their trip, and in Green's case, food.

"I'm pretty tired, not that hungry," Green told reporters at the Pelham Bay station in the Bronx, one of the city's five boroughs. "My speech is definitely slurred. ... I'm just glad to be done."

Badaczewski ate beef jerky to sustain himself but was still exhausted at the end. "I'm going to sleep as long as I can now," he said.

Mike Falsetta and Salvatore Babones set the previous record, 25 hours and 11 minutes, in 1998. Falsetta promised earlier this week to come out of retirement if his record was broken.

Green said he and Badaczewski completed the trip through every station in the system in 24 hours, 2 minutes.

Reuters was not able to independently verify their claim.

They said they were motivated by a combination of logistical planning and endurance.

Figuring out the shortest subway route is a variation on a long-standing problem in mathematics known as the Traveling Salesman problem -- determining the shortest route for a traveling salesman visiting a number of cities.

The subway problem is a bit more complicated because train times must also be considered, said William Cook, a professor of industrial engineering at the Georgia Institute of Technology in Atlanta who specializes in the Traveling Salesman problem.

Green and Badaczewski did not use computers to generate a plan their trip but did spend months working it out.

Speaking on the 7 train to Flushing on Wednesday, about seven hours into their ride, Badaczewski said: "Lots of nerds can sit in a room and use their computer to come up with the best route but we're willing to put our route on the line and actually come out here."

"And eat and drink as little as possible and hopefully not have to go to the bathroom at all," Green added.

© Reuters 2006. All Rights Reserved.

http://today.reuters.com/news/articlenews.aspx?type=domesticNews&storyID=2006-08-24T210036Z_01_N24463650_RTRUKOC_0_US-TRANSPORT-SUBWAY-RECORD.xml&archived=False