

Imaging Equipment..

ZOW 65mm f/6.4 Pretzel Telescope,

ASI432 mono Planetary Camera imaging onto a Samsung i7 Laptop Computer,

iOptron Equatorial Mount,

High payload Sirui Ball head as a Equatorial Wedge... smaller in size then the standard wedge. It was to be used later as a standard Camera Tripod head. Double duty.

High payload, Sirui Carbon Tripod.



Imaging Summary...

A lot went wrong just minutes before it was time to image.
It seem to start out alright shortly after setup...

1.) I found that the software froze... not typical for this version. Re-boot solved it, but...

2.) BUT... The Computer went into an update mode. WHAT? HERE? Where is the signal coming from? Fortunately, it finished quickly.

3.) I unknowingly turned off the live feed to the camera. After trying to understand the error message, I found that the camera needed to be recording to show the image on the screen. This is a function I would normally never use.

It was not until after the Eclipse and after I was out of the hot glaring Sun that I located that button on the tool bar.

4.) The mount started to lose tracking. I found that the thumb tightening assembly to save packing space, is not reliable. This was a new iOptron mount that did not have fine adjustment on the declination axis, but tests and rehearsing prior to the trip proved that it was very easy to adjust. However, the short cut of using a lightweight ball head for latitude adjustment and my rebuild of the tube saddle, parts seemed to loosen up. Attempts to center the Sun were met with a lot of backlash. The counterweight was not used in order to save weight. The Telescope was set up out of balance to provide gravity assist to the tracking motor. But this added to the fine adjustment difficulties given the backlash.

When I got home, I discovered that some fasteners were loose. I replaced the thumb screws with set screws. I drilled small holes so the setscrews would nest better to the components they were attached to. I also replaced the tube saddle with a more robust William's Optics aftermarket Saddle... and no more Ball Heads to save weight and space. The (double duty) Ball Head was not even needed for the planned tripod shots. Don't risk losing the images to a little weight savings.

5.) Another new problem was that there was a delayed reaction of the image on the screen. I have 2 software's that the camera will talk to, but I went back to the old software as it seem to freeze up less in testing. I was also using the camera I thought would give me a better screen reaction time when re-aiming the Telescope.

Again, back home, I tested tmy 2 software and found that the newer one actually worked better.

6.) Still trying to center the Image and fighting backlash, I finally braced one hand against the Telescope to hold it in place and used the other to clumsily bracket exposure. It was good enough.

As Totality neared, I was literally seconds from grabbing my Sony Camera with the 70-200 f/4 zoom lens with the 1.4x Teleconverter attached. I even removed the Solar Filter from the Telescope early just in case I bumped the Telescope and there was needed reacquire the Sun.

But it worked out and a solid collection of images were collected. And for the first time, my images finally appear to show a defined Chromosphere just prior to second contact...

2026 Total Eclipse Gallery



Near Second Contact
& full Corona



Bailey Beads
& Prominences



Mid Corona detail, Beads
& Prominences



Mid Corona detail
enhanced



Full Corona, Beads at
beginning of Third Contact



Full Corona &
Third Contact



Full Corona &
Diamond Ring



Beginning of
Third Contact



Diamond Ring
at Third Contact



Well into the
Third Contact