National Sprint Car Hall of Fame & Museum

JERRY BLUNDY

Gerald W. "Jerry" Blundy was born and raised in Brimfield (IL). In 1941, at age fifteen, Jerry went to Aledo (IL) to watch his neighbor Earl Overin compete in a 'big car'. In 1944, Jerry bought that Essex racer with the wages that he earned working at Caterpillar, and he drove it around the country roads. Two yeras later Jerry ventured to Springfield (IL) and watched Jimmy Wilburn win on the mile track.

Finally, on June 15, 1950, Jerry Blundy raced for the first time on a track at Fairbury (IL) in a friend's 1937 Ford stock car. Two days later he was wheeling a Hisso-powered sprint car for old friend Earl Overin at an International Motor Contest Association (IMCA) race at Jacksonville (IL). Frank Luptow, Phil Mocca, Junior Hower, Clarence "Beef" Ketter and Ken Rubright were all racing that day, but a nasty wreck on the dry and dusty track eliminated most of them, including Blundy. Jerry ran a few more times that year, though.

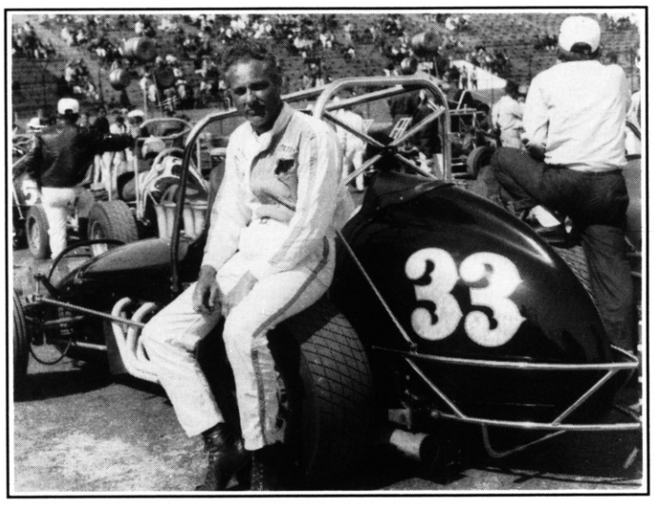
In 1951, Jerry got his big break driving Bill Dobson's Rutherford Rocker Arm sprinter. In fact, he clinched the Mississippi Valley Racing Association (MVRA) title with it that year. At that time, MVRA was a 'B' class circuit, with the top three or four cars and drivers moving up to the IMCA fair dates. Of the MVRA championship, Blundy admits it "really wasn't much. But for me, at the time, it meant a lot."

In '52, Jerry got the opportunity to drive the George Davis DOHC Dreyer in IMCA competition and he jumped at the change to compete with the likes of Bill Holland, Bob Slater and Jimmy Campbell. He ran a few shows with IMCA, but he competed mostly with the MVRA, eventually finishing second in their points.

In 1953, Jerry continued running sprints and jalopies. He won 22 feature events that year in his number 33 jalopy at Illinois tracks like Jacksonville, McComb, Quincy and Pittsfield. He was also successful with MVRA in 1953 and '54 and with Ray Duckworth's United Speedways organization. And he continued to hold down a 'real job.'

By 1955, Jerry had moved to Galesburg (IL) and was running more and more with IMCA in the Keith Sapp Buick and the Mahoney Brothers stock block. The next year he finished sixteenth in IMCA points and fourth in United Speedways points. He also competed in one United States Auto Club (USAC) Midwest sprint car division event. In 1957, he claimed his first-ever IMCA win at Knoxville (IL).

Jerry Blundy had clearly made a name for himself in IMCA racing in 1958, wheeling Lyle Hyneman's Offenhauser and Les Kings' Offy to a fifth place position in the final point standings behind champion Bobby Grim, Don Carr, Arnie Knepper and Jim Hurtubise. After that season, Blundy switched from the Offy of Les King to that of Ralph "Speedy" Helm. In '59, they captured an event at Oskaloosa (IA) and finished seventh in points. He again competed in a lone USAC event.



Jerry Blundy *(Bruce Craig Collection)*

In 1960 Jerry piloted the Helm Offy and even rimrode to a win at Oklahoma City (OK), in the Eldon Wilson-Jerry Blundy Chevrolet. Blundy wrenched and drove his own red number 33 sprinter at events in which "Speedy" didn't want to compete. This year he competed in one USAC Eastern Sprint car division race.

In the 1961 Hawkeye Futurity at the Iowa State Fairgrounds in Des Moines, Blundy suffered a serious accident when he lost the steering and went flipping out of his Helm Offy and laid motionless on the track. Fortunately, everyone avoided his body and he wound up with just a broken collarbone and some bruises. Amazingly, he still came back that year to finish 6th in points. He also ran two USAC national sprint car races.

Jerry Blundy moved to the Eldon Wilson Chevy full time in 1962. He scored wins on the dirt at Lincoln (NE) and a pair on the pavement at Nashville (TN). Despite suffering minor burns on his hands and legs on the final day of the season at Winchester (IN), he still managed a seventh place position in points. He also won his first main at Knoxville (IA).

Wins at Champaign (IL) and Des Moines in 1963 marked a successful IMCA campaign in which he finished fifth in points behind Gordon Woolley, Pete Folse (Sr.), Johnny White and Jerrry "Scratch" Daniels. He also began racing Glen Alhorn's "Blue Tank" supermodified at Knoxville (IA) that year against such competition as Greg Weld, Earl Wagner, "Sonny" Helms, and Thad Dosher. Jerrry scored five wins there that year, but Weld got seven and the track title.

In February of 1964, at the Florida State Fairgrounds in Tampa, Jerry flipped hard in Ennis "Dizz" Wilson's car when its throttle stuck. Fortunately, again, only a broken arm was the extent of his injuries. In all, Jerry ran 14 IMCA events that year and finished 16th in points. At Knoxville Raceway, he won three times.

Jerry only ran eight IMCA shows in 1965, instead concentrating on his racing at the Marion County Fairgrounds in Knoxville, where he won the track point championship, in his supermodified/sprinter "Old Blue". Finishing second through fourth in points were Norm Galpin, Bill Utz and Kenny Weld, respectively. In his biggest disappointment there, Blundy lost the Knoxville Nationals sprint car championship on the last lap to Kenny Weld in lapped traffic.

In 1966, Jerry claimed the biggest win of the season in the Hawkeye Futurity at Des Moines. He lead all thirty laps over such competition as Jim Moughan, Chuck Lynch, Bill Puterbaugh and Woolley. He also captured a win at Lincoln on his

(Jerry Blundy Bio Continued Below)

way to a seventh place standing in points. And he won five more features and his second straight Knoxville point title over Bill Utz and Tom Bigelow.

The next IMCA season was an even better one for the Galesburg racer, with wins at Knoxville (IL) twice, Des Moines, in the Missouri Futurity at the one-mile State Fairgrounds in Sedalia, and Lincoln. He finished third in IMCA points in '67 behind champion Karl Busson and Jerry Richert.

1968 was another great year, with six more wins and another third in the standings behind Richert and Lee Kunzman. His IMCA win sites included Knoxville (IL) twice, Cedar Rapids (IA), Des Moines, Sedalia and Lincoln. He also captured the '68 IMCA compact sprint car (midget) championship for owner Jim Patton and three more wins at Knoxville.

One of his biggest wins that year though, was not in the Midwest at all. Instead, it was at a J.C. Agajanian-promoted $5,000-to-win open competition ('outlaw') event at the Sacramento (CA) mile track in October of the year. The field included a virtual Who's Who of supermodified/sprint car racing: Bob Hogle, Paul Jones, Dick Fries, Billy Wilkerson, Johnny Anderson, Leroy Van Conett, Jimmy Oskie, Bob Cleberg, Wayne Weiler, Jerry McClung, Jan Opperman, Dick Sutcliffe, "Little Joe" Saldana, Jerry Blundy, "Buzz" Rose and Lee Kunzman. Jerry started the event in fifteenth place but took the lead on lap 83 of the 100-miler. He was followed at the checkereds by Hogle, Anderson, Frank Secrist, Fries, Wilkerson, Weiler and Kunzman.

In 1969, Blundy scored another win at Knoxville, another IMCA win at Sedalia and finished ninth in points. And he won the second annual Sacramento Open with his "Old Blue" machine over competitors George Farmer, Jack Clegg, Wilkerson, Cleberg, Wally Tallberg, McClung and Colby Scroggins. As for the payoff for the race, Blundy said "it paid $650 to finish fourth. That's what attracted me to it. I said I could surely finish at least fourth."

Blundy won three more shows at Knoxville in 1970, including the Friday night feature during the Nationals. He also won the third and final Sacramento Open in a tragedy-marred event which claimed the lives of drivers Jimmy Gordon, Ernie Pursell and official Walt Rieff. It was also the year that he made his debut in the Mel Moffitt-owned, Floyd Trevis-built red number 33 sprinter. A win at Tampa secured the '70 Winter Nationals crown for him, and six more wins over the course of the season assured him of his first-ever IMCA point championship. He out-pointed Richert, Jay Woodside, Dick Sutcliffe and Eddie Leavitt. According to Blundy, "I always wanted to win the IMCA championship. It meant an awful lot to me to win the title. All those years of racing, that was my ultimate goal."

Blundy made it two-in-a-row in 1971 when he won on nine occasions in IMCA sprint car competition. He opened the year with two wins at Tampa and the Winter Nationals championship and followed it with checkereds at Knoxville (IL), Chippewa Falls (WI), Wausau (WI), Eldon (IA), Lincoln and at Topeka (KS) twice. Blundy and the Moffitt Special bested Sutcliffe, Leavitt, Ron Larson and Chuck Amati for the title. He chalked up five more wins at Knoxville Raceway. It was also the year that Blundy was voted into the S-K Tool Mechanics Hall of Fame in Chicago.

In 1972 Jerry won two more events at Tampa, although a mid-season crash at Webster City (IA) left him with a broken arm, a severed concussion and caused permanent damage to one eye. It also ended his chances of an IMCA three-peat. He also scored one win at Knoxville in '72. One year later at Burlington (IA), he broke both arms and reinjured his eye. He continued to race with varying degrees of success throughout the rest of the 1970's, finally retiring in 1981. His career accomplishments include both IMCA titles, 42 IMCA wins and 34 wins at the legendary Knoxville Raceway (still seventh on Knoxville's all-time win list).

Jerry Blundy was inducted into the Knoxville Raceway Hall of Fame in 1980, and the Greater Peoria Sports Hall of Fame in February of this year. He lives with his wife Margaret, or Marge as she prefers, in Dahinda (IL). Their son Cliff followed in his dad's footsteps in sprint car racing annd had a decent career driving at Knoxville Raceway and with the IMCA.