

NATIONAL SPRINT CAR HALL OF FAME



LOU BLANEY

BY DOUG KENNEDY

Lewis G. "Lou" Blaney was born on January 4, 1940, in Hartford, Ohio, to parents George and Peg Pfouts Blaney.

Lou was a graduate of the former Hartford High School.

He began his racing career with his father in 1958, behind the wheel of a Cadillac-powered '34 Chevy Coupe. He became part of his father's three-car team known as the "Three White Mice," which included Lou Blaney, Gib Orr and Dale Johnson.

During his first twenty years behind the wheel, Blaney earned instant acclaim as a super-modified and super-sprint car driver. He drove for various owners, such as Bill Thomas of Hermitage, Pennsylvania, and the Crash Brothers of Greenville, Pennsylvania. He captured over 200 wins in the division from 1961 to '81. His biggest win came in the 1966 National Open at the Williams Grove Speedway in Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania.

In 1978, Blaney started racing DIRT-sanctioned big-block modified stock cars, scoring over 200 wins in that class from 1978 to 2002. He also finished second to Merv Treichler in the 1981 Syracuse 200 at the New York State Fairgrounds.

Over the years, Blaney scored wins and track championships at many regional speedways, including his hometown Sharon Speedway, Tri-City Speedway, Mercer Raceway Park, Lernerville Speedway, Jennerstown Speedway, Sportsman's Speedway, Expo Speedway, Raceway 7, and Pittsburgh Pennsylvania Motor Speedway. He won Walt Wimer's Cavalcade of Champions big-block modified regional point title sixteen times and the super sprint regional point title four times.

"I was just interested in winning as many races as I could and the championships would come from there," said Lou Blaney back in 2007.

Lou was a five-time modified point champion at the Sharon Speedway. The driver of the famous red and white number 10 also had a stellar career at Tri-City where he won his first race at that track back in 1968. He holds the track record by racing eleven straight seasons with at least one win each year.

From 1972 through '78, Lou won the Lernerville Speedway sprint car title every year but '76 when he lost out to Ted Wise. Three modified championships at Lernerville came in 1989, '91, and '96. Blaney captured 118 combined sprint car and modified wins at Lernerville, 89 at Mercer, 53 at Tri-City, 45 modified wins at Raceway 7, and another 121 modified victories and 11 sprint car wins at Sharon.

Perhaps the feat he performed in 1973 was as good as it gets. Driving for the Crash Brothers, Blaney raced his sprint car at Lernerville on Friday nights, Jennerstown on Saturday nights, and Tri-City on Sunday nights. He and Ted Wise were hooked up in a points battle at all three tracks and Blaney was able to win all three track titles on the very last nights of racing.

Lou continued to drive sprints until 1981, when his oldest son, Dave, took over the ride. His modified career began in 1978 and continued until his retirement in 2005.

Interestingly, Lou and his two racing sons, Dave and Dale, were all stellar basketball players at Hartford High School. Lou scored better than 1200 points in his career, Dave was a very talented point-guard, and Dale was a star player who went on to play at West Virginia University and had a tryout with the NBA's Los Angeles Lakers.

The Blaney family purchased Sharon Speedway back in 2002. The family, including wife Kate, has been involved in running the everyday operations of the Hartford, Ohio, track.

Blaney Lumber, which is on the site of their home, was the family business that was sold the same year they purchased the track.

"On the racetrack, you never remember him knocking anybody out of the race," said Dave. "He just wouldn't do that and that was the reflection on what type of guy he was."

"He was a pure winner," said Dale. "He hated to lose - actually despised it. The one thing that truly defines him is that he was a winner."

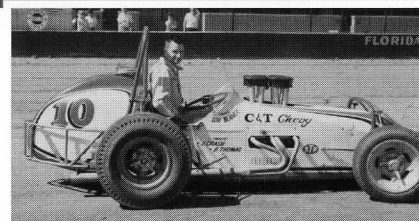


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"He absolutely loved racing," said Kate. "What more did he have to do? He certainly didn't have to prove that he was the best."

Lewis G. "Lou" Blaney of Hartford passed away on Sunday, January 25, 2009, in the Sharon, Pennsylvania, hospital after a long battle with Alzheimer's disease. He was survived by his wife, Kate Keir Blaney, whom he married August 13, 1960; two sprint car racing sons, Dave Blaney and his wife Lisa of High Point, North Carolina; and Dale Blaney of Hartford, Ohio; five grandchildren, Emma, Ryan and Erin Blaney, all of High Point; and Leah Blaney and Ashley Carson, both of Hartford; a sister and brother-in-law, Marianne and Robert Bates and their children, Tom, Rick and Luanne Bates; and a brother-in-law and sister-in-law, Tom and Sandy Keir and their children, Stephen Keir and Amy Nason. Lou was preceded in death by his parents and two brothers, Robert and Gary Blaney.

Lou Blaney had previously been elected to the Pittsburgh Circle Track Club Hall of Fame (1997), the DIRT Motorsports Hall of Fame (2000), the Curbside Coaches Hall of Fame (2007), the Sharon Speedway Hall of Fame (2007), the Tri-City Speedway Hall of Fame (2008), and the Lernerville Speedway Hall of Fame (2009).

Lou Blaney's legacy includes his sons, Dave and Dale Blaney, who also achieved racing success. Dave is a former Knoxville Nationals and World of Outlaws (WoO) sprint car series champion, and has raced the last several years with the NASCAR Sprint Cup series. Dale is a three-time All Star Circuit of Champions (ASCoC) sprint car series champion.

In July of 2009, Sharon Speedway began hosting a "Lou Blaney Memorial" race that is now an annual event.

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