



## 2020 National Sprint Car Hall of Fame Inductee

# TIM SHAFFER

## Driver

by Doug Kennedy



Photo: Paul Arch

**S**print Car driver Tim Shaffer always seemed to fly under the radar, the ultimate underrated and unassuming racer. “I’m just a regular homeboy from Hopewell Township,” said the 53-year-old Shaffer. “When I come home, I just want to go out and have a beer with the guys. That’s exactly me.” This was Tim back in 2005. Fifteen years, multiple All Star titles, World of Outlaws wins and a Knoxville Nationals wins later, that statement still holds true.

Coined the Steel City Outlaw, Shaffer actually resides in the town of Aliquippa, Pennsylvania, some 15 miles out of Pittsburgh. “I think I’ve certainly earned that nickname,” said Shaffer.

As to his nomination to the National Sprint Car Hall of Fame, Shaffer said “It’s hard to believe, really. It’s quite an honor. It was unexpected but graciously accepted.”

Shaffer has put together a solid resume that includes a number of impressive wins. He was the 1999 World of Outlaws Rookie of the Year, a three-time Ohio Sprint Speedweek champion (2011, 2013, and 2017), the Cotton Classic winner, back-to-back-to-back-to-back All Star Circuit of Champions titlist in 2009, 2010, 2011, and 2012, the winner of the 2010 \$150,000 Knoxville Nationals, the \$100,000-to-win 2018 Sprint Car World Championship in Mansfield, Ohio, and a two-time winner of the

Don Martin Memorial Silver Cup held at Lernerville Speedway. He is fourth all-time with 66 career All Star wins and has 27 World of Outlaws victories. From 1999 through 2008, Shaffer competed in the World of Outlaws Series and was one of the original “Mean 15”.

He began his racing career at the age of 10 in a Go-Kart at Mercer Raceway. Six years later (1993), he got his first ride in a family owned 410 Sprint Car. Ed and Dorothy, his parents, funded the operation. In his very first year, he won the Lernerville track championship and the Busch Shootout, a series that was run between Lernerville and Pennsylvania Motor Speedway.

In 2010, Shaffer won the North East Open Cockpit Award by winning an amazing 21 features.

From 1995 through 1997, Tim raced for two different owners,

Gene Jenkins of Milton, Pennsylvania, and Dwight Reid out of Toledo, Ohio. “Gene had a small budget and couldn’t race every week,” Shaffer said. “He had really good stuff but didn’t have the big budget to race all the time so we raced smart. Racing for both owners didn’t really affect either one. Everybody knew the situation. I wanted to race as much as I could and at the time; I was doing it for a living. It was pretty much a 50-50 split and neither owner was affected by it.” The first time he raced the Jenkins car, he won the King of the Hill at Grandview Speedway.

Throughout his three decades plus of racing, Tim Shaffer has had a number of quality rides. Those cars and car owners include the #12 Apple car for owner Bob Stewart, the #11H Vi-varin car for David Helm, the #83 Beef Packers car owned by Dennis and Teresa Roth, the #6 Lonnie Parsons/



Shaffer after winning a cool \$100,000 in Mansfield, Ohio.

Photo: Paul Arch

On the gas at Sharon Speedway in 1992.



Photo: Paul Arch

Casey's General Store car, the #83 Aaron Call/Janet Holbrook car, and the #49x Demyan-Rudzick Excavating car.

Shaffer said that even though he didn't win any features in 1997 through mid-1998, the Apple team with Lee and Ed Stauffer changed him as a driver. "I became a different type of driver," Shaffer said. "They pushed me to race hard. We had 22 second place finishes. It was a learning curve for me. I became a lot more aggressive and hungrier to win."

The Apple team was becoming a force when Shaffer received an offer to drive the #11H car for Helm. "It was a hard decision to leave the Stauffers but it was a move for my career to move forward that I had to do." For his next two seasons, he captured six feature wins. That success attracted car owners Dennis and Teresa Roth and Tim made the move once again.

"They were awesome owners but they wanted results," Shaffer said. "This was another level for me and I had all the pressure to win. He won in his very first race behind the wheel of the #83 (Cotton Classic). For 2003, the Roth's decided to do a mixed bag schedule of Outlaw races and independent races in California and Oregon. "I wasn't real happy with it because I wanted to be on the Outlaw tour," Shaffer said. Midway through mid-June of 2004, he accepted an offer to drive for Lonnie Parsons. "It's

really fun again," Shaffer was quoted as saying of the Parsons ride. "There's not as much pressure as there was before. We were trying to build a team and we were strong and competitive every night."

Shaffer went onto give Parsons his first feature win at Beaver Dam and also racked up 35 top-tens and 13 top-fives.

"I've had so many good race teams. They are special because of that. All are good at the end of the day as long as the performance is going well. If you're not good or successful, you're moved out. You have to be successful with any team that you are racing with, if not, they are going to put somebody else in there that will be successful."

Asked what his biggest race to date, Shaffer responded with, "The Knoxville Nationals, definitely." That win came in the 50th running of the event in 2010.

Prior to that win, Shaffer pointed to his first victory at Lernerville in the Don Martin Memorial Silver Cup race. "Incredible...it was definitely a goal of mine. When you go there, everyone puts the pressure on you because of being a hometown boy and the past track champion (1993)."

Shaffer's bucket list still includes winning the King's Royal at Eldora. "It's one of my favorite tracks because it's demanding and tough to conquer and I really want that win," Shaffer

said. "That race is one that I want. It has eluded me and I think the best I've finished there in the race is fifth place."

Over the last two seasons, Shaffer captured 11 wins and 28 podiums. Overall, Tim Shaffer has 98 career feature wins.

As far as being underrated or underappreciated, Shaffer said, "I'm not the type of guy that talks a lot or brags about his performance, I just make the best out of the situation that I am in. I look at it now and how many years I've done this, and it's been pretty incredible. I have a man cave in my house and I look at all the trophies I've won over the years and it's pretty amazing what I've accomplished during that time. I'm pretty proud of it all."

"All I've ever done is race, race, race," Shaffer said, alluding to the fact that he went right into racing upon graduation from high school.

"I don't know how long I'm going to race," Shaffer said regarding his future in Sprint Car racing. "I guess I would like to get another three to five good years. But a lot of it will depend on my health and the quality equipment that I am in, and above all, I just want to have fun." 🏆



Getting ready in 1994.

Photo: Paul Arch