

NATIONAL SPRINT CAR HALL OF FAME



Photo by: Max Dolder

By Julie Dollansky

There was little doubt that a young Craig Dollansky wanted to be a race car driver. Born on January 27, 1966, he went racing on weekends with his father Bill, around Minnesota and before the age of 10, with a pillow booster, Craig Dollansky was taught to push-start a sprint car. Bill drilled into him - "Do not let off until the car fires!"

Intending to race professionally, Dollansky headed to Knoxville, Iowa, with helmet in hand. Duane Robuck was the first to hire Dollansky to drive in the 410 class but let him go after one season. Soon, he found a seat in Bill and Fred Kain's 1K and he notched his first 410 win on July 11, 1993, in Marshfield, Wisconsin, with the Interstate Racing Association. His breakout race came at the '93 Nationals when he put the Kain's car into the A-main, passing Sammy Swindell on the last lap after starting 18th in the B-Main. He won for the first time at the Knoxville Raceway on May 13, 1995, and continued winning in the Jensen Construction 55 ride the following season. Gaining momentum, he set his sights on his next career move.

Sanctioned series, traveling teams, and bigger paydays were desirable for Dollansky who felt he now had the experience needed to travel. He committed to running on the All-Stars Circuit of Champions tour in 1996 in Dean and DJ Lindsey's #2D sprinter. That same year he crossed the finish line third at the Knoxville Nationals.

The World of Outlaws tour was the aspiration of many drivers with talent, and Dollansky was no different. He remained steadfast in his determination with each team and his goal of racing at the top level. In 1997, Dollansky was hired mid-season by Jim Wahlie to race his 1W on the Outlaws

tour. He took a turn in Gary Stanton's Mopar ride in 1998 and met Wisconsin car owner Scott Boyd later that Fall. Dollansky inked a deal to race for Karavan Motorsports in 1999 choosing the 7 and won his first World of Outlaws race at Perris Motor Speedway in California on October 30 of that year.

The team gelled quickly and won 14 races in 2000 and the inaugural World of Outlaws GumOut Series championship. Karavan and Dollansky raced together for 10 years and winning races at the national level was now a bullet point on the racing resume of Dollansky, who was now referred to as 'The Crowd Pleaser' on tour.

Dollansky was offered Chili Bowl rides in 2001 and '02, and Australian Brian Healey organized the Outlaws Down Under Tour in 2002, which included Dollansky, an opportunity that opened many doors for the American's future of international racing in Australia and New Zealand.

Meanwhile, outside the realm of dirt racing, Karavan Trailers, VMAC and Fattfro Motorsports sponsored Dollansky's efforts to race an Indy Car. Johnny Rutherford mentored and signed off on Dollansky's test sessions, as he was quickly up to speed on the pavement at Indy. Canadian car owner Brian Stewart entered his #33 into the Freedom 100 on May 17, 2003, with Dollansky behind the wheel. An unfortunate accident at Indianapolis Motor Speedway sidelined Dollansky from any racing competition until he returned to the seat of his sprint car in October of 2003 in Las Vegas.

Dollansky was a full-time World of Outlaws series driver from 2001 through 2013 with various professional racing teams. His tenure at Karavan Motorsports ended in 2007. In 2008, he toured with Larry Woodward, winning nine races, and was a teammate to Joey Saldana at Kasey Kahne Racing in '09, winning three more times.

After discussing a deal with Tod Quiring, Dollansky signed with Big Game Motorsports for the 2010 World of Outlaws season and won 32 races with the team in four years. Dollansky returned to his roots in the Midwest, at Knoxville Raceway, and took some time off before committing to race for Troy and Tammy Renfro. He soon found success again, winning at the Iowa State Fair Speedway, Jackson Motorplex,

and at Husets in the 2KS. He announced his retirement on March 27, 2018, and raced for the final time on January 11, 2020, at Western Springs Speedway in Auckland, New Zealand.

In over 25 years of racing, Dollansky developed the skill and prowess to win at any track. He has won in 38 US states, three Canadian Provinces, five Australian States, and on both islands in New Zealand. Dollansky won a championship, multiple points series events, including the DIRTcar Nationals points twice, the Kasey Kahne Challenge, the '02 Rat Bag Cup Series, and a New Zealand series points championship. Winning with all top sanctioning bodies in the U.S. and picked up the final Winter Nationals title at East Bay Raceway. In Iowa, Dollansky won every match race and the main event to earn the 'King of the Hill' title early in his career.

In total, Dollansky was victorious more than 130 times and had a consistent Knoxville Nationals record, making the A-main 19 times in 22 attempts. He has held numerous track records at two of the fastest tracks in the country, Volusia and Eldora. His record of time of 12.707 around the Big E stood for 18 years. He won 66 World of Outlaws races, finishing second in points in 2006 and 2012, eleven times with the All Stars, ten I.R.A. races, 16 at Knoxville Raceway, twelve internationally, and thirteen other 410 races. In 2011, '12, and '13, Dollansky was the first to notch three consecutive Iron-Man titles at I-55, the Outlaws' longest and most grueling race. He won the Eagle Nationals in '08, the International Race of Champions at the 2010 Nationals, the 21st annual Don Martin Memorial at Lernerville, \$25,000 at Skagit Speedway and one Mini Gold Cup.

He is included on the 2002 World of Outlaws sprint car racing game for Playstation, and promoted World of Outlaws races in Princeton, Minnesota, and Spencer, Iowa, winning "Promoter of the Year" honors with his wife in 2008. Outside of his time behind the wheel, he was inducted into the Knoxville Raceway Hall of Fame in 2022. Craig's time at the racetrack has not ended in retirement, as he still attends in support of his son-in-law, 410 sprint car driver, Carson McCarl.

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