



JERRY McCLUNG

DRIVER

by Patrick Wigans

There have been few drivers from Arizona as good as "Termite" Jerry McClung. His racing career started in jalopies and eventually moved on to sprint cars, super modifieds, and midgets. Jerry is best known for the impressive numbers he would put up at his hometown track of Manzanita Speedway in Phoenix, Arizona, but his career took him to many places across the United States. From running weekly at "Manzy" to the national ranks with the United States Auto Club Midgets series, Jerry won well over 100 features throughout his time behind the wheel.

It all started when Jerry was 19 years old behind the wheel of a jalopy. In 1962, Jerry would pick up his first win at Manzanita Speedway. He went on to win three more times that season and, as the saying goes, "the rest was history." The following year, he would pick up nine more victories and earn his first track championship at Manzanita in 1963. 1964 would see McClung pick up four more wins at "Manzy" which was gaining him attention and opportunities to better rides in the sprint car ranks. In 1966, Jerry landed a full season ride in a sprint car where he would win three times and finish fifth in points.

The 1967 season would see McClung earn his first Arizona Racing Association (ARA) championship

in the sprint car after winning seven races. He followed that up winning nine times on his way to a second ARA championship in 1968. Jerry started racing double duty in the sprint cars and super modifieds in 1969 full time. He would win eight more times at Manzanita, including picking up a highlight win at the Hank Arnold Memorial race. During this season, when time allowed, he also ran with the California Racing Association, with whom he would set a new track record at El Centro, California.

Manzanita would start their 1970 season off with a winter series that ran in January and February. Jerry would sweep the series, winning all seven races. He followed that up with two more wins to start the regular season at the track. Those wins would make eleven in a row, which, at the time, was a new Manzanita Speedway record. His 1970 season was shaping up to be a big one and, as with most racers of his era, there were hopes of racing in the historic Indianapolis 500. McClung headed east to Indiana in 1970 with the goal to make those hopes a reality. He would join the USAC Midget national tour for the year and quickly made his mark. He won six races, including one at his home track at Manzanita, and was quick qualifier four times on his way to an impressive fourth place finish in points. He followed it up the next season with four more wins on his way to finishing fourth place again in points for the 1971 season. The last of those wins in 1971 was one of the biggest in his career, as he earned a victory in the prestigious Hut Hundred, run at the big half mile of the Terre Haute Action Track in Terre Haute, Indiana.

Late in the 1970 racing season, with permission from USAC officials to race in a non-USAC sanctioned race, Jerry would come back to

Manzanita to participate in the Western States Championship. McClung would set quick time on his qualifying night and went on to win every race he was in. The resulting victory of the 1970 event would arguably be the biggest of his career. The race itself would go on to be renamed the Western World Championship and became one of the most prestigious races in the country.

Despite all the success of the initial years of the 1970's, a ride for the Indianapolis 500 remained out of reach, and McClung headed back home to Arizona to continue where he had left off, earning five victories in the sprint cars and seven in the super modifieds. Focusing more on the sprint car for the 1973 season, Jerry earned six more wins on his way to a third-place finish in points. The following season he would win once more at Manzanita Speedway and finish fourth in points. For the 1973 and 1974 seasons, McClung also won one race for each season in the super modified ranks. The 1974 season also saw Jerry pick up a win at another famous half-mile track at "The Sprint Car Capital of the World" Knoxville Raceway in Knoxville, Iowa.

McClung started to cut back on racing sprint cars in 1975 and 1976, finishing fourth and eighth in points those years. In the super modified, he picked up seven more wins during those seasons and finished fourth and fifth in points respectively. Through 1979, he would close out his illustrious career earning nine more super modified wins at "Manzy." He would end his career with an impressive record, with 105 wins at Manzanita, as well as his two ARA championships, six CRA Wins, and ten USAC National Midget Series wins.



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