



by Ashley Zimmerman

# ELOY GUTIERREZ

## OFFICIAL

Eloy Gutierrez attended his first sprint car race in 1968, at Albuquerque Raceway in New Mexico. The following season, he went from race fan to official, becoming the corner flagman for the New Mexico Motor Racing Association. From there he would go on to become the chief flagman for several seasons. However, the New Mexico Motor Racing Association isn't where Eloy's story stopped, it merely began.

In the late 1990's, Eloy partnered with his good friend Blynn Dale "BD" Schafer, and in conjunction, they created and introduced electronic timing and scoring to sprint car racing. A contribution that would change the landscape of sprint car racing forever. The technology allowed scoring to become more accurate and efficient than that of hand scoring.

It was on the way home from a World of Outlaws race in Manzanita in 1997 that Eloy and BD would begin to formulate a plan on how to bring the timing system to the World of Outlaws. To this point, electronic timing and scoring had never been used in sprint car racing and was widely thought to be impossible to use. In the winter of 1997, Eloy and BD met with World of Outlaws race director Carlton Reimers to begin the

discussion of bringing the system to the series. Eloy and BD convinced World of Outlaws founder Ted Johnson and race director Carlton Reimers to implement their system beginning in 1998, allowing the series to generate instant line ups and results far quicker than ever before. To this day, electronic timing is utilized across the world in dirt track racing, now at the tip of your fingers in real time, through mobile apps, and through streaming services.

Bringing electronic timing and scoring to the World of Outlaws did not come without doubt; Eloy and BD had to prove themselves and often footed the bill for the equipment and supplies to outfit tracks to have proper detection loops and necessary gear for their first go with the system. While the equipment was far from affordable, it was necessary to prove to the series how invaluable the system truly was. A system that was first met with resistance soon became widely accepted, proving its benefits through use.

The first World of Outlaws race to utilize the system came in February 1998 at the Dirt Track at Las Vegas Motor Speedway. Eloy's timing system would go on to make its live cable television debut with the World of Outlaws in 1998 on The Nashville Network, otherwise known as TNN. From there the system solidified its place in sprint car racing as an integral part of all World of Outlaws television and internet broadcasts.

Eloy would go on to become an official with the World of Outlaws in 2007, shortly after retiring from Sandia National Laboratories, where he had developed safety devices on nuclear weapons; the place his friendship with BD began. However, electronic timing

and scoring is not all that Eloy is known for amongst race fans, drivers, and officials.

While some may have met Eloy registering to race, others were willing participants in the pictures he took of those involved on race days. More importantly, it was "his house" – a Marathon Coach – with an open door, and a freezer full of Klondike Bars that were shared with all. Eloy shared a bond with many members of the World of Outlaws, but none shines brighter than his bond with Sheldon and Zan Haudenschild who have worked to continue to honor Eloy. In 2015, Eloy was awarded the World of Outlaws Ted Johnson Memorial Award for his Outstanding Contribution to the Sport. An award that Eloy shared he was honored to do for the best in the world. In the words of Eloy Gutierrez, "I love what I do, and I love those that I do it with."

On August 19, 2024, after more than fifty years as a fixture at dirt tracks across America, Eloy passed after a hard-fought battle against cancer. In his passing, he has not been forgotten. The World of Outlaws honor Eloy each and every race day, through the Eloy Gutierrez Pill Draw. In November 2025, a quilt made by Eloy with shirts and autographs from the 2021 World of Outlaws drivers was auctioned off at his request, to donate to the World of Outlaws Benevolent Fund to help injured competitors.

Carlton Reimers once shared, "I can't think of any one thing that changed our sport more than electronic scoring. I can't imagine that the National Sprint Car Hall of Fame would be complete without Eloy and BD." A statement that could not be truer.

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