

Fleming County gave start to many drivers; sparked interest in new tracks

COGDARD - Fleming County Speedway provided the spark for interest in racing in the area. While there have been several tracks in the area, including Vanhook Olive Hill, Montford and Ashland, racing in the northeastern Kentucky area has ebbed.

"Things began to change when the speedway opened in 1988. Doug and Carol Fields took over the operation of the track in 1990 and ultimately purchased the facility in the fall of the year. They have opened and operated the 1/4-mile high bank track since that time.

Doug Fields developed his interest in racing as a driver in the 60s and 70s. He drove at Mack Speedway, Vancoufer, Clay City Raceway, Brown County, Russellville, Ohio, and Southern Ohio Speedway.

When Fleming County Speedway opened, Fields negotiated for two seasons in his 401 car.

According to Mrs. Fields, the decision to purchase the track was a big one. Not only was there the financial responsibility, but also to maintain her husband and to give up racing.

"He did purchase the track to improve the raceway and to keep one of the few summer sports in Fleming County alive something to do on weekends," Mrs. Fields said. She noted he also wanted to make improve-

ments to the track. According to Mrs. Fields, the changes at the track have had a positive result. The crowds have doubled, she explained. On an average night between 600 and 1,000 people turn out.

"The number of cars has also been on the upswing. "We average 20 to 70 cars per weekend," she said.

The season opens the first Saturday in May and the track runs every Saturday through October.

The Fields have several feature events scheduled through the end of the season. One of the highlights of the season was run this past Saturday, the 2nd annual Valvoline "Say No To Drugs."

Mrs. Fields explained, "In '92, we were asked by Valvoline to be the Drug Awareness Track in our area to support their fight against drugs." She noted the local program is held in the form of a national campaign which includes drivers like Indy 500 winner Al Unser Jr., drag racing champion Joe Amato and NASCAR Winston Cup driver Mark Martin. The drivers have teamed up with Valvoline and the Drug Campaign when they were at the track.

Among the improvements planned at the track in the near future is the addition of more seating in the pit area.

Going into the final 2 1/2 months of the season, the 12 pits leaders are:

Late Model
1. Vern LaFavers, Manchester, Ohio; 2. Bill Castle, Madison; 3. Kenny Cherry, Vanzburg; 4. E.M. Snowden, Wayne; and 5. Mark Morrison, Manchester.

Sportsman
1. Alan Henderson, Mayville; 2. Steve Littleton, Flemingsburg; 3. Morris Pledge, Mayville; 4. Harvey Taylor, Betsville, Ohio; 5. Jeff Ginn, Vanzburg.

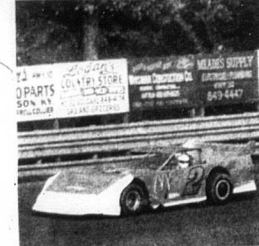
Super Street
1. Jackie Ross, Vanzburg; 2. Tom Haughab, Mayville; 3. John Prater, Madison; 4. Carson Rogers, Olive Hill; 5. Harry Lewis, Tullahoma.

Street Stock
Jackie Plinders, Wallingford; 2. Randy Weyer, Wallingford; 3. Treve Heaster, Madison; 4. Eddie Evans, Mayville; 5. Danny Simpson, Betsville, Ohio.

Bomber
1. Perry Dearing, Mayville; 2. Kelvin Gay, Mt. Olive; 3. Larry Toller, Wallingford; 4. Mickey Doyle, Wallingford; 5. Kevin Hall, Flemingsburg.

Street Stock Ladies
1. Karen Doyle, Wallingford.

Bomber Ladies
1. Linda Dearing, Mayville.



Mark Pinsky looks to the flag stand as he prepares late blast off in his late model during a race Saturday at Fleming County Speedway. The McDonald's restaurants in the Mayville area are among the Texas main sponsors.



Tony Kemper pilots his street stock through the turn at Portsmouth Raceway Park. Kemper piloted his car's number, 41, to honor former Carter County racer Wayne McGuire.

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Mini-sprints provide fun, entertainment for Ashland driver, hundreds of fans



Eddie Stone of Ashland waits patiently in his mini-sprint while members of his pit crew change a flat tire during a red flag period at Portsmouth Raceway Park. Crew members, race officials and fans hold up the front end of the car while the tire is replaced along the edge of the track.

At least this season, Stone is not particularly worried about the lack of races. "This is our 10th year (of marriage) and my wife is expecting for the first time," Stone explained.

While this is Stone's third season in mini-sprints, he has a long association with racing. He drove unlimited cars for eight years before moving to the mini-sprint.

"Stone's car is powered by a 1200cc Suzuki engine and is consistently one of the fastest cars on the track. He holds the qualifying record at Portsmouth. Sponsors are an important ingredient in the racing picture and Stone's ability to race is helped by his sponsors, D&M Cycle Sales, Halton's Auto Supply, Lawson Products and Kentucky Tech Ashland Campus.

Stone hopes the local tracks will show more interest in the mini-sprints next season.

"It's (the mini-sprint) a pretty good crowd-puller," he pointed out.

A mini-sprint race has been compared to a chain saw convention. Unlike the others, mini-sprints are powered by motorcycle engines, rather than traditional car engines. However, the engines provide plenty of muscle for the small, quick-racing cars.

A mini-sprint turns laps more quickly than modifieds, but just slower than late models.

For Eddie Stone, 30, of Summit, the mini-sprint offers a challenge and a lot of excitement.

"We've had a lot of fun," Stone said. In only his third season, Stone has had good success in mini-sprints. He won the Memorial Day feature at Portsmouth Raceway Park last season and was leading in points midway through the season.

Mechanical problems plagued Stone over the second half of the campaign and he finished fifth for the season in points.

A sponsor at the Ashland Oil Refinery at Caledonia, Stone spends much of his free time working on and racing his car.

Races have become a bit harder to come by this season. Portsmouth has discontinued running the mini-sprint each week.

"We've only had nine races this year," Stone said in the pits prior to taking to the track at Showtime Speedway the first weekend in August. He overcame damages suffered in an accident to finish third. He was top qualifier and ran third the previous week at Lawrenceburg.

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