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RPM Racing News Remember When by Don Gamble

Al Deane started his career in the auto industry as a parts man at Morton Chevrolet. His work ethic led him to become the owner of Deane Pontiac - Buick for thirty one years. Al always liked to go to Florida in the winter to watch the sprint car races. One year his new Pontiac was stolen from the parking lot at a track in Tampa and he had to rent a car to get home. Deane's involvement in auto racing lasted for fifty years as a car owner until his death on December 12, 2005 .

He had a very impressive roster of good drivers that included: Herb Buck, sons Skip and Doug Deane, Tom Fleming, Davey Jones, Jim Magill, Ed Murphy, Fred Reisinger, Jim Shaffer, Jack Sodeman, Dwight Steele, Jack West, and Russ Woolsey. Skip ran for about fifteen years and Doug for two years but they never raced against each other. He started in the claimers with driver Joe Kertesz then the sprint cars, and eventually the modifieds.

Jim Magill drove a couple races for Deane in 1965. They took a 1957 Chevy that Al campaigned in the Claiming Division to attempt qualifying for the Tri-State Championship 150 at Heidelberg Raceway in Carnegie Pennsylvania . Magill said they qualified for the "B" main but elected to pass. The car did not have a quick change so Jim ran the first lap in high gear and the next one in second gear which caused the valves to float.

In 1966 they rebuilt the sprint car and during the season they had a "falling out" and Deane sold the car to Magill. The winter of 1966 Al teamed up with Grover Falk together they built the coupe pictured above. Russ Woolsey was their driver. They were running a small block Chevy engine which Deane liked. Falk wanted to run a big block. Al decided to sell the car to Falk who then put in the big block and hired Vic George as his driver.

Deane was out of racing for a few years until he purchased the black #7 that Dale Johnson drove to many victories at Blanket Hill Speedway in Kittanning , PA. Magill, Jack West and Herb Buck all had some seat time in the car that year. The next car that Deane ran was purchased from sprint car star Bobby Allen. When Skip Deane started running in the modifieds the team got out of the sprints. Eventually Skip started driving a sprint car much to the displeasure of his mother Pat.

Al felt that the best part of racing was spending time with family and friends and the toughest part was Jim Shaffer finishing second at the Sharon Nationals. The team's most memorable moment in racing was the day that Skip won at Orville Ohio on Father's Day. The most embarrassing moment in racing also belonged to Skip when he went to Hickory and forgot his fire suit. His sister Linda had to rush home to get it.

Al got involved in racing because he loved automobiles. His favorite competitors were Bob Rice and Yip Robinson. The pit crew included Ed Naugle, Mike Lavin, and Bill and Francis Dreyer. He had a co-owner, Grover Faulk, for a couple of years and eventually sold the original number 65 shown in this article to Faulk and Russ Woolsey and Vic George took over the driving duties. Try to imagine Woolsey at 6'7" and George at maybe 5'7" sharing the ride from time to time. When Falk quit racing he sold the car to the King Brothers who still have it. The car was on display at the banquet a few years ago when Mercer Raceway honored Vic George with a legends award.

Tracks where the team competed included: Blanket Hill, Buckeye, Butler, Canfield, Clinton, Greater Pittsburgh, Green Valley, Heidelberg, Hickory, Jennerstown, Latrobe, Lernerville, Meadville Fairgrounds, Mansfield, Ohio, Mercer, Motordrome, North Hills, Sharon, South Park, Sportsman's Speedway, St. Clairsville, Tri-City, Uniontown, Wayne County, Williams Grove.

I often ask how teams pick their car numbers and Al's daughter Linda explained; "dad was trying to decide, he reached in to his pocket and pulled out all his change, there was 65 cents and that's where the number came from".

Al Deane and his wife Patricia made their home in Economy, PA where they raised their five children Linda, Skip, Doug, Jeff, and Danny.

Al Deane was one of the pioneers in local short track racing who provided opportunities for many talented individuals to do some excellent racing. Al is one of the reasons we will always “remember when”.

Rappin' on Racin' and Trackside

Rappin' on Racin' can be heard live Mondays at 6:00 on WEDO 810 on the AM dial and is available over the Internet by way of our website www.speedwayproductions.biz. Trackside from Lernerville Speedway is on Friday evenings at 6:00 PM . The show is also available on the WEDO Website the Monday following the program at <http://www.trackside.wedo810.com/>