



# Danny Lasoski

*Ever since he can remember, racing has always consumed Danny Lasoski's life. Through all of his life challenges, including overcoming a bout with testicular cancer in 1994, racing has remained the one constant.*

It's all he's ever wanted to do. "I'm the kind of person who strongly believes if you're going to do something, you do it to the best of your ability. Leave no regrets. I owe everything in my racing career to my dad. He is the one that taught me how to work on these cars and, to this day, I still admire his work ethic. The guy is relentless and I would like to think that it is a trait that I learned from him," said Danny Lasoski.

Nicknamed "Dude" by his grandfather Louis Schumaker, Daniel Leroy "Danny" Lasoski was born into a racing family on February 3, 1959, the son of George and Barbara Lasoski. Barbara's mother, Hazel Corbin, and her mother, Ella "Nanie" Schumaker, were huge racing fans. Danny's father George and uncle Tom Corbin were tearing up the tracks during Danny's youth, so being bitten by the racing bug came as no surprise to anyone. "I was always hanging around watching them work on their cars and it just came natural that I wanted to race one, too."

Interestingly, Danny currently lives in Higginsville, Missouri, not far from his boyhood home. He is the proud father of two children, Hope and Landon George, from his marriage to Chris Bingham Lasoski. And he is currently engaged to Debbi Croley.

Danny Lasoski's racing career began at Saline County Speedway in Marshall, Missouri, in 1979 when he began racing alongside his father. "When I was in high school I had a '69 Camaro and that car was my baby. I sold that car and bought my first race car with the money. I can remember making the parts to put that thing together, bending gun-barrel tubing to make the nerf bars and everything. I learned a lot about the value of equipment early on because if I wrecked it, there was a good chance I didn't race the next week."

The '79 Saline County Speedway "Rookie of the Year" enjoyed moderate success in the Lasoski family-owned Fred Vance Wings number 33 sprint car, but his first big break came when he was hired to drive Bob Derry's number 22 car in 1984. "I begged Mr. Derry to drive that car. Matter of fact, I begged his girlfriend, Carolyn Fouts, and, truth be told, I think she's the one that got me the ride," Lasoski laughed. The two teamed for four wins including his first at Knoxville Raceway. Lasoski was also crowned the 1984 I-70 Speedway track champion at Odessa, Missouri. Following his time with Derry, Lasoski was hired by Max Rogers in 1986, racking up twelve feature wins and his first Knoxville Raceway track championship.

Lasoski's career sky rocketed when he joined forces with Ron Kohls, Guy Forbrook and Gaerte engine sponsor Al Cole in the summer of 1988. "Guy and I were always tough to beat. Problem was we were both stubborn and hard-headed, so we fought like brothers... still do. He is a great mechanic and

knows how to make a race car fast, so we enjoyed a lot of success together," he said.

After teaming up, Forbrook and Lasoski, the former employee at an ammunition factory, would wreak havoc over the Midwest for the next five years racking up 100 wins, four Knoxville Raceway titles ('89, '90, '92 & '93) and three Huset's Speedway track championships ('89, '90 & '93) with the Jackpot Junction Casino number 5 sprinter.

"I won my first World of Outlaws (WoO) race with Guy down in Oklahoma City (1989). I remember that was a pretty big deal for us. Early on, we both knew we had a good thing going, but I don't think either one of us knew how much success we would actually have together. Looking back at the numbers, I'd say we did okay." Danny drove for Casey Luna in his Ford-powered number 10 sprint car for parts of the 1991 and '92 seasons, when not with Forbrook. Lasoski joined forces with Gil Sonner and the Casey's General Stores number 47 sprinter in 1994 and early '95 to add another 37 feature wins to his career totals and his sixth Knoxville Raceway track championship ('94). He raced for Al Hamilton in the Cromwell Tools-sponsored number 77 for the second half of 1995. Forbrook and Lasoski continued their rocky relationship in 1996 to add 22 more feature wins together and his seventh Knoxville Raceway track championship.

"I knew that if I wanted to be considered one of the best, I'd have to race with the best every night, so I really wanted a full time World of Outlaws ride. I teamed with Jim Wahlie in '97 and had probably the worst year in my career. We just couldn't get anything going so I ended the year with my buddy Chris Black and sponsor Vern Massey. Dennis and Teresa Roth had the Beef Packers car on the tour and were looking for a new driver and I was the lucky guy they chose," he explained.

After a slow start with the Outlaws, Lasoski achieved his lifelong dream when he passed Sammy Swindell on the last lap of the '98 Knoxville Nationals to win his first title. "That was easily one of the best, if not the best, nights of my life. It was awesome. I wanted to win that race so bad. I felt like a huge weight was lifted off my shoulders. The thing I remember most is seeing my dad in victory lane after I won. I had never seen him that happy. It was just a special time for all of us. That win propelled our team and me as a driver, because we knew we could beat anyone on any given night," said Lasoski. Over the next three years, the Beef Packers team would win 32 more times with the World of Outlaws.

Tony Stewart came calling in 2001 and the two became a dominant force on the Outlaw tour, winning a stunning 96 races together including three more Knoxville Nationals titles ('01, '03 & '04) and the World of Outlaws point championship in

2001. "Tony gave us the best equipment, the best resources and, most importantly, he believed in us, and his support helped us succeed. We had some good years together and won a lot of races," said Lasoski. It was also during this time he scored a surprising International Race of Champions (IROC) victory at Texas Motor Speedway in 2004.

After parting ways with Stewart, Lasoski would once again fill the seat for Dennis Roth in '06-'07. The two teamed up for another 23 feature victories and the 2006 National Sprint Tour (NST) championship. "The NST was only around for one year, but with Fred Brownfield's wisdom and leadership, I really think he would have made it work. I was fortunate enough to win Fred's series title and that is something I'll always remember."

Lasoski once again teamed up with Forbrook in 2008 to win his eighth Knoxville Raceway track championship and seven more Knoxville victories. In 2009, the Dude joined forces with Lonnie Parsons and the Casey's General Stores machine. Parsons and Lasoski won six times with the WoO, before parting ways at the end of the 2010 season. "I can't say one bad thing about Lonnie Parsons. 'LP' is one of the good guys of the sport and he deserves only the best."

True to his family tradition, the 2001 North American 410 Sprint Car Poll "Driver of the Year" often races against his sister Sandra's son, Brian Brown, the defending Knoxville Raceway track champion. And Danny Lasoski continues to support his friend Tony Ross' charity, the Michael Ross Foundation, which supports The Bay Cliff Health Camp for severely handicapped children.

Through the years, whether residing in Dover, Lexington, or Higginsville, Danny Lasoski has managed to put together some astounding stats. They are, as of May 31, 2011: 386 feature victories; 4 Knoxville Nationals titles ('98, '01, '03 & '04); World of Outlaws point champion ('01), and four-time runner-up ('99, '02, '03, '04); 86 World of Outlaws feature victories (120 including preliminaries); National Sprint Tour (NST) point champion ('06); 8 Knoxville Raceway point championships; 95 feature victories at Knoxville Raceway; feature wins at 105 different racetracks across USA and Australia; four-time competitor with the International Race of Champions (IROC), including 1 IROC win at Texas Motor Speedway on April 2, 2004; 30 All Star Circuit of Champions victories.

By Bob Jones  
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