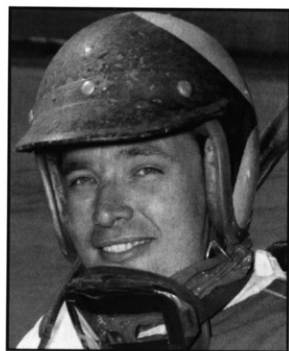


# NATIONAL SPRINT CAR HALL of FAME & MUSEUM

## JAY WOODSIDE

by Rich Boteler  
& Bob Mays



Jay Woodside  
Dave Van Patten Collection

Jay Woodside was born on January 6, 1939, in Dodge City, Kansas, and was adopted at birth by Claude and Harriet Woodside. He was raised in the small town of Haysville before the family moved to Wichita in 1953.

In 1952, Jay was asked by a teacher if he would like to go with the school band to the Kansas State Fair in Hutchinson. Although Jay did not play an instrument, he accepted the invitation and carried a tuba while marching with the band. By accompanying the band on this trip, Jay witnessed his first sprint car race and he immediately knew that he wanted to become a race car driver.

In seventh grade, with friend Doran Raines, Jay started tinkering with some old cars at his friend's father's salvage yard. Woodside started his racing career at the age of sixteen at Robbins Speedway in Wichita, driving jalopy stock cars.

Woodside had a limited amount of success at first in the jalopies but gradually became more competitive. By 1958, Woodside was running at the front more often than not, with his first big win coming at the Kansas State Fair in Hutchinson. He also started traveling with friendly local sprint car racers like Harold Leep, Bill Nelson, Dale Reed and owner Carl "Red" Forshee. By doing this, Woodside started getting some sprint car rides of his own. One of his first ones was in the Pete Forshee Chevy, as a substitute for Bill Nelson. By 1961, Jay had become a regular on the International Motor Contest Association (IMCA) sprint car circuit driving for veteran car owners Merle Heath and Art Peacock.

Woodside got off to slow start that year, but really came on once the fair circuit started in earnest. He came to Knoxville, Ill., on the first weekend in August, and left with a fourth and a third place finish, then ran fifth the next day at Faribault, Minnesota. Less than two weeks later, Jay won his first sprint car feature while driving for Heath at Algona, Iowa, by beating out the reigning IMCA champion Pete Folse in Hector Honore's powerful Black Deuce. The next day at Wausau, Wisc., Folse repaid Jay by beating him.

Woodside scored another top three finish at West Union, Iowa, behind Ralph Donaldson and Folse. In September, Woodside had good runs at Des Moines, Iowa, Lincoln, Nebraska, Topeka, Kansas, and Birmingham, Alabama, on the IMCA trail. For the season, he finished 14th in IMCA points and was named Rookie of the Year!

Jay also started running midgets at this time, and won a feature at Bud Carson's Oklahoma City Fairgrounds track aboard the Bill Hoback Offy. He also nearly made the Hut Hundred at Terre Haute, Indiana, in his first try. In fact, he was the first alternate for the 100-lap race, but when one of the qualified cars was unable to run, Woodside was informed that he would not be allowed to run with only

a Temporary Permit. Instead, a United States Auto Club (USAC) regular was going to be inserted into the line-up. That driver, A. J. Foyt, had just won his first Indy 500, and went from 33rd to win the Hut Hundred as darkness was settling in that day!

In mid-1962, Jay suffered severe leg and hip injuries during the Jayhawk National Super-modified races at Topeka, which put him in the hospital for a long time and kept him out of racing, and the army, for an equal period of time.

By 1964, Jay was aboard the Hegge & Besse Buick sprinter and was back at the level of the '62 season. Although no wins were recorded, Woodside had several top five's during the season at such traditional IMCA tracks as Chippewa Falls, Wisc., Mason City, Iowa, Austin, Minn., West Union, Spencer, Iowa, and Oklahoma City, Okla. At the end of the season, Woodside found himself in fifth in the finalpoints for IMCA behind Jerry Richert, Jim McCune, Jerry Daniels and Harold Leep.

Jay experienced a bit of a dip in his IMCA performance in 1965, finishing 19th in the final standings. He did have a second place run in one of the biggest races of the year, the Missouri Futurity at Sedalia, when he finished second to Jerry Richert. He also made a comeback in the Jayhawk Nationals at Topeka, the race he had been hurt in three years before, when he led the first 36 laps in one of Jerry Weld's cars, only to finish second to Grady Wade.

Jay started the 1966 season with a win on Memorial Day at the Belleville High Banks in Kansas in a Big Car Racing Association (BCRA) meet. His ride was the Fred Goodrich Chevy also known as the "Belle of Belleville."

In June, Woodside teamed up with Ted Hall and his powerful Chevy powered car. In IMCA action, despite only running 13 of the 39 races, he finished 13th in the final tally with two wins at Topeka. In BCRA competition, Woodside and Hall went to Holyoke, Colorado, and won. They followed with consistent runs at Belleville and Hutchinson to claim the 1966 BCRA Championship over Roy Bryant, Dale Reed, Orville Nance and Gordon Woolley.

The capper of the 1966 season for Woodside, was at Knoxville, Iowa. He didn't make it to the Marion County Fairgrounds oval until mid-June, but from that point on, it was like he owned the joint. He won four features and set one-lap and 20-lap track records leading into the Knoxville Nationals.

On opening night of the '66 Knoxville Nationals, Jay Woodside laid down the gauntlet for the other racers, by breaking his own track record with a 21.64 clocking of the half-mile gumbo. This put him on the pole for Saturday night's 25-lap feature. Rain delayed the finale until Sunday however. When the race started, Woodside dropped back, but several red flag situations allowed Ted Hall to adjust the car and on the 20th lap he took the lead from Lloyd Beckman to win the biggest prize in dirt track sprint car racing!

An interesting side note, when Woodside set the one-lap record on Thursday, he blew the engine in Ted Hall's car. Had the final day of the Nationals not been delayed, they may not have been able to make repairs in time. Jay would later say that his outside pass of Beckman

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## JAY WOODSIDE, cont.

was his 'biggest thrill' and the Nationals win was the 'biggest victory' of his career.

For 1967 it was more of the same, as Woodside powered the Ted Hall Chevy to the mid-season championship over Bill Utz at Knoxville. Jay also was quite active on the IMCA circuit while still getting in several super-modified events. One such weekend had Woodside finishing sixth in a sprint event at Sedalia in the afternoon, then put the roll cage on and won the Missouri State Junior Championship at the same track. The next day Woodside traveled to Des Moines and won the IMCA event there.

At Hutchinson for the IMCA race at the Kansas State Fair in September, Jay made a "pass in the grass" on Jon Backlund as they came down to the checkered flag for a big win. Other top finishes came at Tampa, Florida; Schererville, Ill.; Granite City, Ill.; Cedar Rapids, Iowa; Eldon, Iowa; Lincoln, Topeka, Spencer and Tulsa, Okla. IMCA's final point list showed Jay in sixth place behind Karl Busson, Jerry Richert, Jerry Blundy, Darl Harrison and Jim Moughan.

In 1968, Hall took on the duties of crew chief for Greg Weld's USAC effort, which left Woodside without a ride. He picked up rides with Swenson & Williams and Taylor "Pappy" Weld among others before settling into the Keith Barker Chevy at the end of the year.

Jay Woodside and the Keith Barker Chevy proved to be a tough combination on the IMCA circuit in 1969. Though they won only one event during the season in IMCA, Woodside was the picture of consistency. He ran solidly in the top five all season and finished in a tie for second in the final standings with Don Mack and just behind Darl Harrison.

Jay's one IMCA win was a masterpiece as he defeated Jan Opperman in a great race at the Iowa State Fair in Des Moines. Jay also won the inaugural race at I-70 Speedway in Odessa, MO., in super-modified competition.

Hank Smith hired Jay to drive his Bob Trostle-built sprint car in 1970. They got off to a fast start, winning the opening day event at I-70 Speedway. He also won the Gage County Fair event at Beatrice, Nebr. Although he was winless on the IMCA circuit, Woodside again displayed amazing consistency and finished a close third in the standings behind Jerry Blundy and Jerry Richert.

Jay jumped into the Chadborne & Levernez Chevy to begin 1971 and won an early season event at Knoxville, only to have the owners sell the car out from under him.



Jay Woodside

Bob Mays Collection

Woodside caught on with the Ricke/Hill (R & H Farms) team late in the year and had some good runs with them.

Gary Moulin's Grant King four-bar sprinter became Jay Woodside's home for the 1972 season. They raced at Topeka, Knoxville and made appearances at selected IMCA races throughout the year. Woodside was engaged in a tight battle with Ray Lee Goodwin for the track championship at Topeka and took down several wins on his way to the title, which went to the last race of the season. Towards the end of the 1972 season, Jay moved back to Wichita, after having lived in Kansas City for several years.

The move to Wichita meant a shift in Jay's career. Super-modifieds were just hitting their stride in this area and a racer of Woodside's ability proved to be a great asset to car owners. Jay drove for Larry Prather, Leon Boomershine, Dale Parson and several others before hooking up with Warren "Jelly" Wilhelm for the 1976. They were quite successful, winning at Wichita, Tulsa and Oklahoma City in weekly competition. They were also very competitive on the National Championship Racing Association (NCRA) circuit, until Jay was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis, which ended his season. He still finished third in NCRA points, behind Harold Leep and Frankie Lies.

Jay was still dealing with his M.S. condition in 1977, but he did score one big win. Driving for Chet Wilson's son Jerry, Woodside won the first Chet Wilson Memorial at 81 Speedway. This win is all-the-more-significant because Jay drove for Chet on the IMCA circuit in 1964.

Jay completed his race-driving career in 1984, after years of running jalopies, midgets, sprint cars, super-modifieds, 100-inch dirt champ cars, and stock cars. He drove for some of the best car owners in the business, including Taylor "Pappy" Weld, "Speedy" Bill Smith, Doran Raines, Bruce Edwards, Bob Smith, Gene Besecker, Paul Sparks, Jim McMillan, Jerry Gilbert, "Red" Forshee, Paul Harrington, Al Hamilton and many others.

Jay's family includes two children, Randy (who was the 1989 IMCA sprint car Rookie of the Year) and Ronda, as well as three step-children, Rocky, Jason and Eric. He also has six grand-kids with another on the way in May. Jay married his wife, Pat, in 1996 and the retired couple reside in Wichita.

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