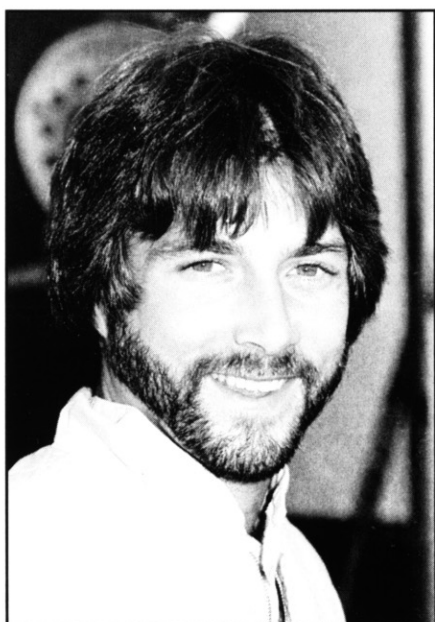


## BRAD DOTY



Brad Doty John Mahoney

Brad Doty was born in Millersburg, Ohio, on July 27, 1957, to parents Dale and Doris Doty. Brad grew up on a farm among three sisters, Deb, Belinda, and Ami.

The Doty's were friends with John Haudenschild and his sons Ed and Jac. John raced a modified at the nearby Lakeville quarter-mile dirt track, and the boys grew up going to the races together. Ed soon began driving a modified at Lakeville and Wayne County Speedway in Orrville. Eventually, when Ed moved up to the sprint car division, an opportunity arose for young Brad Doty to buy and race the modified in 1973.

Late that year, at 16 years of age, Doty traveled with friends Ed and Jac to the Williams Grove National Open sprint car race at Jack Gunn's speedway in Central Pennsylvania. There they witnessed such stars as Jan Opperman, Kenny Weld, Steve Smith, Lynn Paxton, Bobby Allen, and Larry "Smokey" Snellbaker. According to Brad, "After that trip, it was pretty hard not to think about driving a sprint car over the next couple of seasons.

After high school, Brad moved on to vocational school, where he met local dirt track racer Kenny Jacobs. So, in 1974 and '75, the central Ohio dirt tracks hosted Ed & Jac Haudenschild, Kenny Jacobs and Brad Doty. By '76, all but Brad had graduated to sprint cars, mostly using Jim Culbert's CAE chassis.

By mid-1977, Brad got the opportunity to drive a sprinter at Mansfield. He soon found himself in Wayne Yerian's Floyd Trevis-built car. In 1978, Doty got his first steady ride with owner Ken "Speed" Bodkins and he earned his first main event win at Lakeville. Later in the season, Magna-Fab employee Doty moved into Kenny Jacob's old ride, the sprinter owned by John Harmon, John Gantz and Dave Pope. And he continued to be supported by Shirley Kear of Kear's Speed Shop.

In 1979, Doty won thirteen of sixteen mains at Lakeville Speedway, clinching the mythical point championship. Brad won a show at the Mid-American Raceway in McCutcheonville in the Lavern Nance sprinter owned by Gantz, Harmon & Pope. He also netted fifth place in points with the Midwest Outlaw Super Series (MOSS).

During the winter of 1979-80, Brad met his future wife Laurie in Wooster. In 1980, the 'professional' racer, no longer working at Magna-Fab, moved up to the Western Pennsylvania circuit. It consisted of Don Martin's Lernerville Speedway in Sarver, the Tri-City Speedway in Franklin, and every-other-week at Latrobe. Brad quickly became a consistent winner at Lernerville and Tri-City, and he soon picked up the financial and moral support of Sam Bowers of the Bowers Coal Company in Kittanning, Pennsylvania. Doty clinched the Sarver, Franklin and Cavalcade (Western Pennsy) point titles.

For 1981, Sam Bowers bought the Nance sprinter, hired mechanic Gary "Deuce" Turrill, and gave Brad the opportunity to race regularly with Bert Emick's All Star Circuit of Champions (ASCoC). Partially into the season Sam replaced Turrill with ex-Nance mechanic Tommy Sanders.

That year, Brad won ASCoC races at Earl Baltes' Eldora Speedway in Rossburg and at the Sharon Speedway in Hartford. He finished the year third in points and earned the "Rookie of the Year" title. He also won non-sanctioned races at Sharon, Susquehanna, Tri-City, and Williams Grove. Late in 1981, Brad capped his magical year by marrying Laurie in Hawaii.

For 1982, Sam, Tommy and Brad switched to a Gambler chassis sprinter for a run with Ted Johnson's World of Outlaws (WoO). Although he didn't make every show, Brad ran well enough to finish fourth in points and earn "Rookie of the Year" honors, both with the sanctioning body and at the Knoxville Nationals. Brad claimed WoO wins at Devil's Bowl and Silver Dollar, in addition to another ASCoC win at Eldora and a pair of open-comp mains at Chillicothe. By this time, Daryl Saucier had replaced Sanders as the chief mechanic on the Bowers Coal Company car number 28D.

In 1983, Brad continued pursuing his dream on the WoO trail, along with occasionally running, and usually winning, open shows on off nights. In April, Brad claimed his first WoO finale at the fairgrounds in Oklahoma City, Okla. He followed it up with a WoO win at Eldora in mid-May. And, on May 20, Brad won at the Lincoln Speedway, where in victory lane it was announced that Laurie had just given birth to their first child, Brandy.

Doty also claimed non-sanctioned wins at Devil's Bowl, Lincoln, Expo, and I-30 in the first half of '83. However, shortly thereafter, things began falling apart. Doty and Saucier weren't communicating, and business pressures forced

Bowers to pull out. Doty, after missing some races to re-group, finished the WoO season sixth in points with car owner Gil Suiter of Phoenix, Arizona.

In 1984, Doty teamed with Suiter's friend and fellow Phoenician Gary Stanton, a noted sprint car builder as well as owner/mechanic of the number 75 sprinter. Doty's first win for Gary came in an open-comp show at Williams Grove, though Gary was not present and "Deuce" Turrill turned the wrenches that night. In July, he and Gary won a WoO main at his beloved Lernerville, earning one of Don Martin's famed hoagie sandwiches by beating Steve Kinser and Sammy Swindell.

Doty followed it up with preliminary mains at Williams Grove, and Knoxville during the Nationals. That fall, he won a finale at Santa Maria, Calif., on his way to another sixth place in WoO points. According to Brad, "We had the car going good, and the bonus was that Gary and I got along very well personally. When we were together we ran well and we had fun. It was a very good period in my career."

The following season included a WoO win at Houston and an open win at Buckeye (Wayne County). However, by mid-July, chassis business problems back in Phoenix forced Gary Stanton to pull his "house car" off the WoO trail. Doty quickly jumped aboard Ron Pack's 'Four Aces' Gambler sprinter and won an All Star Circuit show at Granite City, Ill. He also claimed an open race at Farmington and the Jerry Weld Memorial at I-70 in lead-up shows to the Knoxville Nationals.

At the sport's national championships, Doty won the C-main, B-main, and worked his way up to sixth in the A-main behind winner Doug Wolfgang (wrenched by Davey Brown, Jr. & Sr.), Sammy Swindell, Ron Shuman, Jeff Swindell and Dave Blaney. Doty finished the year with WoO wins at I-70 and Knoxville, and an unsanctioned win at I-30 in Ron Pack's hometown of Little Rock, Ark. Doty finished eighth in WoO points.

In 1986, Brad Doty teamed with noted mechanic-turned-owner Kenny Woodruff and his Coors Light-sponsored Gambler number 18 "house car". They started the year with a win in Florida at Volusia County in All Star Circuit competition. They followed it up with a WoO win at Hanford, before an eye injury at Williams Grove in May took him off the circuit for awhile. In late June, after Doty re-joined the series, low finances forced Woodruff to turn the Coors Light and Gambler sponsorships over to Les Kepler and Fred Marks.

In July, Brad's wife Laurie delivered their second child, Braden. And, early in August, Doty scored his first win for Marks & Kepler at Orrville in an ASCoC event. Preliminary night WoO wins followed at the Knoxville Nationals and at the Chico Gold Cup. A win in the \$10,000-to-win Pacific Coast Open at the legendary Ascot Park Speedway in Gardena, Calif., climaxed Brad's year in 1986.

## BRAD DOTY, *continued*

February of 1987 found Brad sweeping the \$10,000-to-win two-day WoO show at Ascot with Marks & Kepler. Wins also came at I-55, Knoxville, Eagle, Santa Fe and U.S. 131 in WoO competition.

However, late in '87, owner/mechanic Karl Kinser and driver Steve Kinser had the WoO troops covered with their Coors Light-sponsored sprinter. Kinser won the WoO title, with Doty second in points. According to Brad, "Looking back, 1987 was my most successful season in racing. It was the most money I had ever made, and I should have been on a real high. We should have been elated with our season, but we weren't. It was just the opposite. There we were, so very close to the top, and we were bitterly unhappy about finishing second."

In 1988, Fred Marks left the team, and Coors was replaced by Kodiak smokeless tobacco as the sponsor. However, by mid-February, Brad Doty made the decision to leave the team, too. Brad took over the vacant seat in the Gary Runyon-owned sprinter. It is in this ride that he won a United States Auto Club (USAC) winged sprint car main event in May. In mid-June, Brad re-joined friend Gary Stanton's team, this time running number 40 and sponsored by Duzmor. A month later, they had their first win since getting back together in another USAC show in Findlay, Ohio. It was just days before the July 22-23 \$50,000-to-win Kings Royal championship at Eldora.

Doty finished third in the preliminary night show behind Doug Wolfgang and Cris Eash. On Saturday on the first lap of the feature on a wet track, Doty became involved in a violent accident. His flipping car was hit hard by others and it began coming apart. Doty was rushed to the local Coldwater hospital, where he was air-lifted to the regional Miami Valley Hospital in Dayton. According to Brad, "I had fractured the thoracic level vertebra between T-4 and T-5, which is about the middle of my back."

Those injuries to Doty's spinal column have left him paralyzed from the chest down. After ten days in ICU, the wheelchair-bound Doty, understandably depressed, was sent to rehabilitative therapy centers in Chardon and Columbus. In September, while Brad was in Columbus, Laurie gave birth to their third child, Brittani, in Orrville. Brad and Laurie, both individually and together, faced incredible struggles in that summer of 1988. Said Brad later, "But from the bottom we gathered ourselves up and inched our way back."

For the remainder of 1988 and most of '89, while loving fans and friends provided moral and financial support, Brad and his family started piecing their lives back together. The house was converted to being wheelchair-accessible, as were their vehicles. Interviews were given to the motorsports media. Brad even attended the 1989 Knoxville Nationals to thank everyone for their support. But, for the most part, he rem-

ained a spectator, which was very hard for the former racer. In 1992, Slick 50 Sprint Car World Series television producer Pat Patterson called Brad and offered him an analyst's position on The Nashville Network's broadcasts of live sprint car racing from Arizona. After much hesitation, Doty accepted the offer. That assignment with veterans Mike Joy and Dick Berggren has led him to years of work in the television, radio, print and electronic media with such stalwarts as Ralph Sheheen, the late Larry Nuber, Larry Rice, Bruce Ellis, the late Steve Evans, "Still Wide Open" autobiography co-author Dave Argabright, Bobby Gerould, Eli Gold, Roger Hess, Dave Bowman, Mark Kuchan, and Patti Wheeler. Brad Doty received the National Sprint Car Poll's "Media Member of the Year" award in 1997 and '98. The driver-turned-media-member, ever one of sprint car racing's most popular ambassadors, received the poll's "Outstanding Contribution to the Sport Award" in 1997. In 1998, Brad returned to Eldora Speedway on the tenth anniversary of his tragic accident to pace the Kings Royal field in a replica sprint car with hand controls.

Today, in 2001, Brad continues to provide expert commentary on TNN: The National Network's Pennzoil WoO Series television broadcasts. In fact, last night he was scheduled to work the first-ever live TV show from the late Don Martin's Lernerville Speedway.