

THE DIVAS

OF THE POWDER PUFF DIVISION

By raycer27



I'm not sure when the last regular race was held for the ladies in the powder puff division, but judging by some of the old news clippings it seems to be between 1960 to 1962. If someone knows the correct date please let me know. I do know they did run a few ladies races at P'ville around

the mid 70's and late 70's.

There were around 17 women that

competed over the years and trust me; this was serious competition

between the women. They all got their share of press time, but the ones that seemed to get mentioned a lot

were Myrtle Falkinburg, Hazel Young, Ruth Eisenhower, Audrey Schumsky, Helen Camp, Dolly Souders and Flossie

Ashman. Myrtle lived in New Gretna and at that time, worked for the old "Woolco" Dept. Store in Pleasantville and drove a car sponsored by Belks Garage in New Gretna in the late 50's.

These ladies were the charter members of the women's division and I guess you could compare them with the Roller Derby Queens that raced the



RUTH EISENHOWER, treasurer of the W. S. C. A. R. A., current point leader, will be driving either car 5E or 5R.



AUDREY SCHUMSKY—Winner of the May 5th Powder Puff Derby.



banked track at the Cherry Hill Arena, yes I admit that we went every Friday night, but that's another story.

Hazel Young lived in Somers Point N.J. and was the first lady to win at the Vineland

Speedway. She also served as President of the Women's Stock Car Racing Association of South Jersey.

It may have seemed like an 8 lap fill in race to the people in the stands

but believe me, there was some serious competition and bragging rights associated with those races.

Now I'm sure I'm bound to miss a few of the women, but contact me and we can always add them in later. Also in the running were Agnes Force, Dolly Truex, Eleanor Voss, Gail Garrison, Sally Beakley, Shirley Schwegel, Grace Biggs, Betty Whitaker and Betty McCray.

Betty Whitaker was the wife of Milt Whitaker whose car was the yellow # 12 that ran P'ville and Vineland Speedways.

In the 60's & 70's they did run a few selected powder puff races and Carol Archer and Connie Kirkpatrick joined the roster. Carol was the wife of George Archer #18 and Connie's husband was Terry

"Hoss" Kirkpatrick who drove the blue Question Mark. There was another woman, her first name was Renee but I don't know her last name.

Then, somewhere in the early 70's two gals from Manahawkin, Rita Parker and Mary Anne Rostien came to P'ville with their husbands, Larry Parker and Sonny Rostien. Mary Anne won her race with Rita finishing in 2nd place. It was a pretty big deal for the Rostiens, because Sonny also won the sportsman feature that night too!

Another gal that came on the scene was



Margaret Edwards, wife of Joe Edwards, the Modern Stox Champion in 1978. Margaret was Powder Puff Champ in 1976, co-winner in 1977 and runner-up in 1978 driving her husband's car the #3A

Now they did bring Myrtle Falkinburg out of hibernation in the mid 70's and she continued her winning ways at selected events and then wound up winning the Women's Racing Championship in 1978 at the Pleasantville Speedway that year.



Myrtle had years of experience on some of the drivers having raced at Atco, Manahawkin, New Egypt and East Windsor and of course her home track, Pleasantville. She really got hooked on stock car racing back in 1950 at the now defunct Toms

River Speedway, a 1/2 mile dirt track. Myrtle also had a secret desire to drive an open cockpit midget race car and as far as we know she never got to fulfill that dream, so are there any owners out there that'll give her a ride?

Myrtle was also honored by the publication of a sports card at a 1999 Award ceremony at the New Egypt Speedway.

As I said before, if anyone has any more photos or information on any of the drivers, contact raycer27@bellsouth.net, and we'll be happy to display them. We can always add photos and info to this article.

I must give special thanks to the following people who were generous enough to let us use their photos for this article:

Pete Stemmer
Russ Dodge

Tom Flanagan
William Curly

Tom Mc Andrews
Sonny & Mary Anne Rostien



Myrtle Falkinburg
