

## **OLIVER FOKKEN**

Oliver Fokken got involved in racing by helping Hall of Famer Al Fiedler when Fiedler built one of his first Ford coupes in 1953. When Bob Van Anne, father of former Huset's pit steward Tommy Van Anne, opened his new Soo Speedway just east of Sioux Falls in the spring of 1954, he hired Fokken to guard the back pit gate. Van Anne quickly realized Fokken had more value in the scorer's stand and moved him to that position early in the season. Fokken scored every race at Soo Speedway from that time forward, and also kept various stats and compiled points. He was employed as a body and paint man at a Sioux Falls new car dealership at the time, and used his skills after hours at his South Sioux Falls 43rd street home and garage. In the early to mid-1950s the Fokken homestead looked like the pit area of any speedway with stock cars lined up awaiting a Fokken paint job. Fokken built a portable air compressor and drove to many race car shops to perform his wizardry with the gun. In 1958 Hall of Famer Fred Buckmiller asked Fokken to join his staff at Huset's. With the blessing of Van Anne, Fokken moved to Huset's and joined forces with Buckmiller as an "official". Fokken performed many tasks including scoring, pit gate and pit area security, and traveled to distant stops on Buckmiller's agenda to Fair races in Minot, North Dakota, Spencer, Iowa and South Dakota stops in Aberdeen, Huron, Parker, and the Sioux Empire Fair. Today points are tabulated with a computer and can be completed in a matter of minutes. Oliver used a short pencil and a long eraser and had current points at every race including some two-and-three-day-in-a-row shows. With a few minor modifications in the tabulation of points, Oliver can easily be credited with the current system of points and point averages as he pioneered that concept in the early years of the Speedway's history. It is estimated that he painted over 150 race cars either with his portable unit, his 43rd street garage or from his beloved Pumpkin Center Paint and Body Shop on old highway 16 west of Sioux Falls.