

Don Marquardt

Don Marquardt only raced for 11 seasons in the area, but he made an impact in that decade-long racing career.

His career included five feature wins at Huset's, which began in 1964 in a modified after he was discharged from the Marine Corps in 1962. He worked for his father and uncle as an auto mechanic before establishing his own shop, Don's Automotive in Sioux Falls.

His racing career launched when his older brother, Darrel, quit racing and let Don use his equipment to get started.

Marquardt later graduated to a sprint car and raced his final race in 1974. Sprint cars didn't begin racing at Huset's until 1980, but he did run the high-powered sprint car at Jackson Speedway in Minnesota.

That last sprint car was No. 9, but Marquardt made his mark at Huset's in a familiar No. 81. That number became Marquardt's when early in his career, he acquired it from Joe Clark, who retired from the sport. Numbers 0-100 were given out each year, and when Marquardt inquired about a number from track manager Fred

Buckmiller, he was told to contact Clark for the 81. He did, and it stuck.

Along with his 81, Marquardt was known for sharp-looking racecars. His first in 1964 was purple, the same color made famous by fellow Hall-of-Famer Dewey Dirkson (Class of 2025). Both cars were sponsored by Strong Florists in Sioux Falls, whose delivery trucks were all painted the orchid purple color.

In later years, Marquardt's No. 81s were gray with orange numbers with a large lightning bolt through the '8' and '1'. Twice, his cars were named "Best Appearing" in Jackson.

Along with racing his own cars, Marquardt also raced for Adrian Mulder and Lyle Nelson, who owned the cars driven by Hall of Famer Jerry Ross (2003). Marquardt's car in 1973 was owned by Nelson and sponsored by Ross Electric.

Marquardt later managed I90 Speedway in Hartford and has the distinction of helping to launch National Sprint Car Hall of Fame inductee Doug Clark's flagging career. In 1976 when Hartford was looking for a new flagman, Clark (Huset's Hall of Fame Class of 2012) offered his rookie services. At the time, the Board at Hartford was looking

for an experienced flagger, but Marquardt, Dieter Proehl, Roger Larson (2002) and Darryl Dawley (2009) vouched for Clark, giving his start in a long sprint car flagging career.