

Steve Penson – Vintage Racing



Steven Penson was born and raised near Forest City, NC. He and wife Pat still live there near their kids and grandkids.

When Steve was around 16, he and his friends fielded his first racecar - a 1950 Ford sedan. This picture must have been taken before the car was ever raced (no dents). He raced this car at the old Rutherford County (NC) Speedway, which was near his home.



A while later, he and his friends tried drag racing this radical looking coach that many of us today would love to own. Check out the car's short wheelbase!



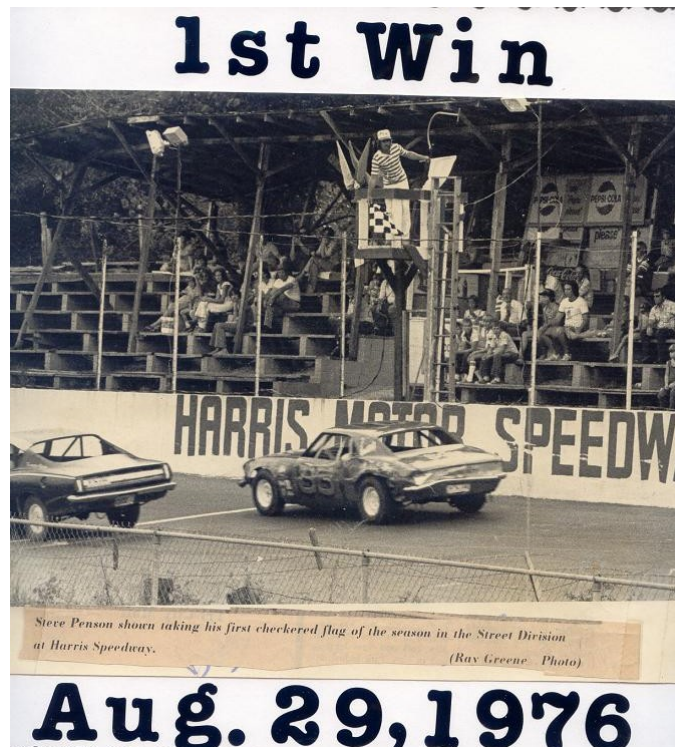
Steve grew up working on sheet metal in his family's heating and ventilation business. When Viet Nam came along, Steve served his time in the Navy "Seabees" doing construction work for the military. He left the Navy in 1968. If you see Steve today, he will often be wearing a "Seabee" hat.



After leaving the Navy, Steve tried drag racing again in the old A-Model coupe shown below. Notice the condition of the car's roof, and the foldout windshield.



In the early/mid-1970s, Steve decided to try the round track racing again. The old Harris Speedway (located in Harris, NC and just north of the SC/NC line and also near his home) was paved at the time and he built a little red Camero to run the Street Stock class at Harris. After a little experience on the pavement, Steve won his share of heats and features with this car. A picture of his 1976 win is shown below.



A year or so later, Steve built a 1966-67 Nova to run the big Cherokee Speedway dirt track near Gaffney, SC.



Around the end of the '70s, Steve retired from racing and concentrated on his business and family. He also did a little demolition derby 'racing'. The picture below shows one of his "derby" wagons.



For most of the next 20 years, Steve stayed out of racing, but in the late 1990s he did attend an NVRA event at the Cherokee Speedway in Gaffney, SC and liked what he saw in the cars. As a result, he bought an old coach and got into vintage racing.



Because the coach has a non-OEM frame under it, Steve had to run it against the "modifieds", but he had fun with the car for a season or two. When the 1935 Ford coupe

that he now runs came on the market, Steve parked the coach and bought the coupe. The 1935 Ford coupe is an original North Carolina racer that was restored around 1994. It has gone through several owners since, but has always been a strong car. For most of its vintage racing life it has been powered by a 300-cubic inch Ford inline six engine. Steve now has the car where he can often run with the V-8 powered Modified Sportsman cars of the NVRA.



Steve's most recent Limited Sportsman win came at the Lanier Speedway on July 21, 2007.



Steve is a dedicated NVRA member and car owner. Because most of our shows are located in Georgia, Steve must tow 200 or more miles each time he leaves his Forest City, NC home to go racing with the NVRA. Even if the NVRA could get shows at the Anderson (SC) Speedway or at Greenville-Pickens Speedway near Greenville, SC, Steve would still have to drive almost 100 miles from his home.

Here is a salute to Steve Penson, vintage racer.