

The First Super Speedway

Racing from the beginning, when drivers were gods

BY JIM DONNELLY



1-2 in the 1997 Indianapolis 500.

“I grew up in Indianapolis, was always a super fan, worked as vice president of marketing and public relations at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, and did some racing myself,” Mark said. “Writing a book on motorsport history has always been on my bucket list, and I’m working on one now about the first decade of American auto racing, plus I’ve been working on this website.”

Many of the stories on First Super Speedway exist in pdf form, and cover such obviously racing-related topics as the careers of Barney Oldfield and Wilbur Shaw. Some of the motorsports entries are more obscure but meticulously researched. How many know that the Indiana State Fairgrounds hosted an early attempt to set a 24-hour record in stock cars? It was between a pair of Nationals, sold by Carl G. Fisher, in 1905. Have you ever heard of Joan Newton Cuneo? She placed second in a 1909 Mardi Gras handicap race in New Orleans amid a field that included Bob Burman, Lewis Strang and the great Ralph de Palma. The previous year, she had escaped disaster during the Glidden Tour when she steered her Queens, New York-built Rainier away from a collision with an onrushing train. Meanwhile, in Indianapolis, a major center of auto manufacturing, a grand salon of new cars took place.

There’s enough here to read about racing and motoring, bringing the ancients to life, to keep you intrigued for a very long time. 🏁

The gladiators of ancient Rome harnessed only one or two steeds for their races. Centuries later, as the automobile began to evolve, and to be run in competition, the modern combatants grappled with exponentially growing horsepower stuffed into chassis that hadn’t evolved all that much since the Appian Way was first plied on wheels. The men who dared to take part in brutal speed contests sacrificed themselves in appalling numbers to advance the cause of motoring.

This is a website that tells their story. First Super Speedway has the creation and very early development of the Indi-

anapolis Motor Speedway as its overarching theme, but the totality of its content covers significantly more than that. It’s really an online gathering place for a plethora of information on the early automobile, both on road and race course. During the time period that it primarily covers, the two worlds were indistinguishable from one another. It’s the creation of Mark Dill, who lives in Cary, North Carolina, a longtime historian of early racing who has marketing experience in the sport, having represented Nortel when it sponsored Fred Treadway Racing, whose drivers Arie Luyendyk and Scott Goodyear finished

Quick Facts

URL: www.firstsuperspeedway.com

Type: Motorsports and motoring, mainly in the first two decades of the 20th century

Focus: Early racing stars, road courses, motoring history, photos, blog entries

Registration: Not required

Family rating: G

Hemmings rating: ★★★★★