

*Racing with Red*

**F**rancis Raynor was born in Rockland County with red hair that subsequently earned him the nickname "Red." He grew up in Nassau County and graduated from the Mepham High School. A few years later Red married Marge and moved to Deer Park where they raised two sons, Kevin and David. Red only had one employer in his lifetime, working overhauling gas turbine engines for Aircraft Turbine Services of Westbury and North Bay Shore. He also served in the Army. Red remembers going to the auto races at the Freeport Stadium as a 12-year-old and sneaking in over the back fence to gain entry to the track. Once inside Red became friendly with the driver of the # 777 Non-Ford, Eddie Brunnhoelzl. Red helped change tires, run for water, etc. From that point on, Red was hooked on auto racing.

One day, years later, the owner of the #777, Henry Mysliweic, decided to sell old #777 and, you guessed it; Red purchased it. Now Red hooked up with his long time friend Ted Voorneveld as partner-owner and a team that lasted 23 years was formed. The cars were known as the Red-Ted specials. All the cars were numbered #93 and #393 and were always painted black and red with white lettering. Red and Ted's cars and crew were always neat as a pin which earned them the title of the best-dressed driver and crew and the best appearing car five times in their career. Red was also a two-time Modified Driving Champ at Freeport Stadium.

He started his auto racing career in 1959 and ended in 1982 due to an accident ("not his fault") while riding his motorcycle. During all that time, Red never missed a race. Some of the different types of engines he used were the old reliable Chrysler six-cylinder Spitfire, the Plymouth 225-cubic inch slant-six and the popular 350-cubic inch Chevy. Some of the tracks that Red competed on were Thompson Speedway, Conn.; Langhorne Speedway, PA.; White Lake Speedway, upstate New York, and Islip Speedway, Riverhead Raceway and Freeport Stadium. (Freeport was his favorite.) He raced in the Non-Ford, Late Model, Open Cockpit Modified and Modified Divisions. A few

of Red's favorite drivers were Eddie Brunnhuelzl, Bruno Brackey and Johnny Coy. Red told me that he preferred to race in the long distance races and he must have because he won many 100-lap events.

Red had a few memorable nights in auto racing. One such night, during a 25-lap main event, he started 23<sup>rd</sup> out of 27 cars. He worked his way up to the 2<sup>nd</sup> spot with 12 laps to go. While going through the 3<sup>rd</sup> turn his car slid wide and scraped the wall, damaging the right front tire and wheel which put him out of the race. On a much better note, Red was honored to win the special Jake Kedenburg Memorial Sportsmanship Award Trophy in 1969. Another first came in 1966 when the Freeport Stadium promoters came up with a new division called the Open Cockpit Modifieds. The cars were basically the same as the year before but now minus the roof. The idea behind the topless was to let the fans get a look into the driver's compartment and watch their favorite driver in action. At the May 1, 1966 opening show of the Open Cockpit Modifieds, Red drove his #93 Plymouth slant-six powered Red-Ted Special. He started in the back of the pack and, one by one, he worked his way up to second place. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> lap of the 25-lap race he took over the lead and was never headed. And to prove it wasn't a fluke he came back the next week and won it.

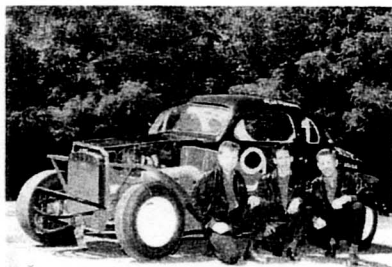
Now retired, Red enjoys his life in Deer Park which includes some serious attention to his hobbies like shuffleboard (he was the Connecticut State Shuffleboard Champ five years in a row, including 2004). Red also attends the weekly stock car racing shows at Riverhead Raceway.

Red was probably one of the most respected stock car drivers of all time. And that also is true for his car owner-mechanic Ted. Red Raynor's helmet, uniform, jacket, photos and other items can be seen at the museum. ●

*Marty Himes is the owner-curator of the nationally recognized Himes Museum of Motor Racing Nostalgia in Bay Shore. (631) 666-4912*



Red Raynor in #93 and Paul Mauceri (#41) at Freeport Speedway in 1976



L to R: Ted Voorneveld (car owner), Rich Oakley (crew member) and Red



Red Raynor after winning another 25-lap main event at Freeport Stadium in 1961



L to R: Track Steward, Herb Sparnecht; car owner, Ted Voorneveld; driver Red Raynor, track official Bob Graupner after Red won the 100-lap Mid-Season Championship Non-Ford Main Event at Freeport Stadium in 1961

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