The Bonds of Racing

Three generations of the Bond family run the dirt tracks of Ohio and West Virginia.

When Larry Bond was just a kid in the late 1950’s his mom and dad, Sarah and Ronnie, took him and his brother Andy to Ohio Valley Speedway near Parkersburg, W.Va. to see his first dirt race. As Larry and his father looked out at the cars sliding around the track, Ronnie Bond turned to his son and said, “I can do that.” Those four words would change the family forever.

Later that week Ronnie disappeared into the family garage while the rest of the family was away and when they returned they found their family car had undergone a radical change. Ronnie had knocked out the windows and installed a roll cage and for the next two weeks the family had to hitch a ride from neighbors to get everywhere from work to the grocery store. What seemed like an ill advised and impulsive decision at the time defined the family from that point on. Ronnie quickly made a name for himself, winning feature races and track championships throughout the tracks in Southern Ohio and West Virginia. It wasn’t long before Ronnie’s sons began following their dad to the track every weekend.

“I grew up teething on a wrench,” Andy Bond writes on his website.

By the time the boys were in high school their minds were made up.

“I knew I wanted to be a racecar driver,” Larry said. All the kids we grew up with at the track, that’s all we talked about.

Having worked on his father’s pit crew for almost 20 years he knew the ins and outs of late model racing and when his father decided to retire in the 70’s Larry carried on the family tradition.

In the 30 years since he started racing Larry Continued D2...
Larry and Andy have both made names for themselves in the racing community. Andy joined a professional race team and travels on the national circuit. Larry elected to stick to the local tracks, but experimented with the national racing circuit when NASCAR’s short-lived dirt racing series emerged in 1995 and ’96. Larry was the track champion at Ohio Valley Speedway in ’96 and overall series champion.

While Andy enjoys the luxuries of a big team with plenty of money to go around, Larry amasses parts and gear from the winnings he’s made over the years. Most local races average a $1,500 payout to the feature winner, and with over 200 feature wins, Larry has been able to keep his car in top shape.

Staying at home to race also means that Larry has the full racing knowledge of his mother and father to help him succeed. Ronnie and Sarah Bond still own a racecar, driven by family friend Roy Rausch, and spend every weekend at the track.

The couple even spent their wedding anniversary watching the races. Normally Sarah, who raced at one point in a few special exhibition races for women, will take notes on other drivers as they run trials. With these notes Larry and Roy can know what to expect come race time. Both drivers carry the Bond’s signature number 10 on the side of their cars as well (Roy’s is modified to be 10x to avoid confusion).

Just as Larry watched his father at the track every weekend, his son Kyle is doing the same and just like his father, can’t wait to get behind the wheel.

Kyle started racing in the mini-wedges (a form of go-kart,) when he was 10 years old. In four years Kyle has over 30 wins and three track championships, two coming this past year. At 14 years old, Kyle has outgrown the wedges and is anxious to join his dad on the track.

“We might take a year off and see,” Larry said of Kyle’s racing future. His son was quick to offer a rebuttal.

“Or we might not!” Kyle said giving his father a smile.