

# Buzzie Reutimann

# STILL ROARING



Stock car racing legend to drive  
Villages Racing Fan Club-sponsored car at Ocala Speedway

The Villages Daily Sun  
Thursday, July 17, 2008  
By Gary Corsair

The Villages Racing Fan Club will hitch a ride with modified stock car legend Buzzie Reutimann Friday evening when the 67-year-old driver puts pedal to the metal at the Ocala Speedway.

Reutimann's famous 00 car will bear the logo of The Villages Racing Club, which welcomed Buzzie to the club's June 4 meeting. Reutimann is the third driver sponsored by the club, which has grown to 200-plus members.



Photo submitted by Erica Simons  
Villages Racing Fan Club vice president  
Gerry Hafer, left, traveled to Zephyrhills  
Wednesday to affix the club's logo to  
Reutimann's car. Reutimann will drive  
Friday at Ocala Speedway.

"Our sponsorships involve our negotiation with the race tracks for a reduced – sometimes free – admission, with a portion, then, of the reduced price going directly to the driver or car owner," said club vice president Gerry Hafer.

The two-year-old club couldn't have picked a better driver to sponsor.

"I think this is great that someone the age of most Villagers is still racing and winning," said club president Glen Carter. "One of the goals of our club is to preserve the rich racing heritage here in Florida. Buzzie is certainly one of the crown jewels."

Reutimann's illustrious career began when 13-year-old Buzzie raced a 1939 Ford coupe purchased from a junkyard. After that first season, Buzzie never drove junk again.

In racing parlance, Emil L. "Buzzie" (nicknamed by nurses who were amused by the buzzing sound he made in the maternity ward during the first days of his life) was born with a silver wrench in his hand.

His father, Emil F. Reutimann, owned a Chevrolet dealership in Zephyrhills and raced on weekends.

"My dad's father came from Switzerland, and I guess part of the Swiss thing is to build things," Buzzie says with a smile. "Dad was a great, great designer. He built his own cars, and it runs in the family."

Emil did more than teach his sons – Buzzie's younger brother Wayne also is an accomplished driver – to build fast cars; he taught his boys to drive to win.

"Dad always taught us, 'If you stall out, get that car cranked back up. Don't sit there and make that yellow flag come out,'" Reutimann recalled.

Fifty-five years and 1,200 wins after Emil gave his son a junkyard Ford with a Sears and Roebuck engine, Reutimann still has plenty of gas in his tank. He's taken the checkered flag three times this year and had several top-10 finishes.

"I'm still winning races, but a lot of it is experience. The younger guys will fly into the corner and go to the upside of the track, and I'll go down inside and go right past them," said Reutimann, who started ninth and finished fifth the last time he raced at Ocala, on March 21, 2008.

Reutimann says his reaction time has slowed – a bit – but it's family, not age, that will likely take him out of the cockpit. As much as Buzzie enjoys racing, he gets a bigger kick out of helping son David, the 2005 NASCAR Truck Series rookie of the year, who is now a regular on the NASCAR Nextel Cup and Busch Series.

"I enjoy going with David so much to NASCAR races, and that takes away from me running during the week," Reutimann says.



Buzzie Reutimann roaring under the checkered flag has been a familiar sight for 54 years at speedways from Florida to New York. Reutimann won 1,200 stock car feature races during an illustrious career.

To the racing Reutimanns, David is poised to fulfill a family dream tragically halted 35 years ago when Buzzie's younger brother, Dale, was killed in a head-on crash with a drunk driver. He was 18.

"Dale was good. He was a natural," Reutimann says. "He was fast right away. He never went through a learning period like Wayne and I did. He would have been the best one of us."

That's a staggering statement from a driver who is a member of the Dirt Motorsports Hall of Fame, the Eastern Motorsports Press Association Hall of Fame and the New York State Stock Car Association Hall of Fame.

Reutimann is hoping for a hall-of-fame showing Friday night, but he's not optimistic.

"I just enjoy racing at all the tracks, but I have to admit that Ocala is not my favorite track," Reutimann said. "I never have figured out the combination of that track. It's an odd-shaped track, but my son, David, just loves that track. He probably won 20 to 25 races there. In fact, he says he's 'Mr. Ocala.' I told him, 'I'm going to win up there, then I'll be 'Mr. Ocala.'"

Grandstands open at 5 p.m. Racing starts at 8. For more information or directions call 622-9400.