

= Tim Richmond =

Tim Richmond (June 7 , 1955 ? August 13 , 1989) was an American race car driver from Ashland , Ohio . He competed in IndyCar racing before transferring to NASCAR 's Winston Cup Series (now Sprint Cup Series) . Richmond was one of the first drivers to change from open wheel racing to NASCAR stock cars full @-@ time , which has since become an industry trend . He won the 1980 Indianapolis 500 Rookie of the Year award and had 13 victories during eight NASCAR seasons .

Richmond achieved his top NASCAR season in 1986 when he finished third in points . He won seven races that season , more than any other driver on the tour . When he missed the season @-@ opening Daytona 500 in February 1987 , media reported that he had pneumonia . The infection most likely resulted from his compromised immune system , which was weakened by AIDS . Despite the state of his health , Richmond competed in eight races in 1987 , winning two events and one pole position before his final race in August of that year . He attempted a comeback in 1988 before NASCAR I banned him for testing positive for excessive OTC (over the counter) drugs , Ibuprofen and Pseudoephedrine ; NASCAR later announced they gave Tim Richmond a new test and tested negative . Tim Richmond filed a lawsuit against NASCAR after NASCAR insisted they wanted access to his entire medical record before they would reinstate him , after losing the lawsuit , Richmond withdrew from racing . NASCAR later stated their original test was a " Bad Test . "

Richmond grew up in a wealthy family and lived a freewheeling lifestyle , earning him the nickname " Hollywood " . In describing Richmond 's influence in racing , Charlotte Motor Speedway president Humpy Wheeler said : " We 've never had a race driver like Tim in stock car racing . He was almost a James Dean @-@ like character . " When Richmond was cast for a bit part in the 1983 movie Stroker Ace , " He fell right in with the group working on the film , " said director Hal Needham . Cole Trickle , the main character in the movie Days of Thunder , played by Tom Cruise , was loosely based on Richmond and his interaction with Harry Hyde and Rick Hendrick .

= = Early life = =

Richmond grew up in Ashland , Ohio . His parents , Al and Evelyn (née Warner) Richmond , met in the course of their work . Al was a welder for pipe construction companies and Evelyn was a field office manager . Noticing that highway crews had to dig up the entire highway to lay pipe , Al designed a machine to bore underneath the highway . To market this invention , he founded Richmond Manufacturing , which eventually exported machines worldwide .

Tim 's driving days started as a toddler when he was given a go @-@ kart that he often drove inside buildings and across his lawn . He later raced the kart at tracks in Moreland and New Pittsburg . Richmond grew up in a well @-@ to @-@ do family , and was sometimes therefore treated differently by his classmates , so his parents enrolled him in Miami Military Academy in Miami , Florida . During his years in Miami , Tim and his mother moved to Florida and his father stayed in Ohio . While home in Ohio over a summer break , he met local drag racer Raymond Beadle through lifelong friend Fred Miller . When Richmond reached age 16 , his parents purchased him a Pontiac Trans Am , a speedboat and a Piper Cherokee airplane for his birthday . Yet his mother Evelyn often worried about spoiling her only son . She once said , " Tim was lazy ... " , and " ... I did everything for him . I ruined him , I admit it . He was my whole life . "

Richmond excelled in sports ; he set a conference record in high hurdles and his high school football career was stellar enough that the academy retired his sports jersey after his gridiron days were over . Miami Military Academy named him Athlete of the Year in 1970 . Richmond 's other interests included flying , and he earned his private pilot license at age 16 . Following high school graduation , Richmond attended Ashland University for about one year before dropping out .

= = Racing career = =

= = = Open wheel racing = = =

A friend of Richmond 's father co @-@ owned a sprint car and Richmond joined the team as a crew member for Dave Shoemaker . In 1976 , 21 @-@ year @-@ old Richmond took the car onto Lakeville Speedway at Lakeville , Ohio for some practice laps . " Somebody put a stopwatch on me , " Richmond said . " I was running laps faster than Dave had been . It was the first time I had ever driven a race car . " Richmond and his father found a red , white and blue @-@ colored No. 98 car in Pennsylvania , which was the same number and paint scheme that Richmond used on model cars as a child . In his first competition at the track , officials placed Richmond in the slowest heat . He passed several cars before spinning out and breaking an axle . Although he made several attempts to get the car pointed in the right direction , the broken axle prevented the car from driving straight . After being towed to the pits , he parked the car for the rest of the event . Later that season , they towed the car to Eldora Speedway , only to have Richmond crash the car again . In response , Richmond 's father fired him as the driver . The next season , Al Richmond bought a SuperModified better suited to his son 's driving style . In 1977 Tim Richmond became both Sandusky Speedway 's Rookie of the Year and the SuperModified class track champion .

Richmond returned to racing sprint cars in the United States Automobile Club 's (USAC) national sprint car tour in 1978 . Competing in 12 races , he finished 30th in points as the series ' Rookie of the Year . That year he attended Jim Russell 's road racing school at Willow Springs International Motorsports Park , setting a student course record . Richmond raced in a 1978 Mini Indy car event at Phoenix International Raceway , winning the Formula Super Vee support event in a Lola T620 . The win attracted sponsors and attention from major owners like Roger Penske . He also competed in USAC 's Silver Crown series .

Richmond 's father bought an Eagle Indy Car chassis and an Offenhauser engine for the 1979 race at Michigan International Speedway . Richmond qualified 21st fastest with a 175 @.@ 768 mph (282 @.@ 871 km / h) lap , significantly slower than Bobby Unser 's 203 @.@ 879 mph (328 @.@ 111 km / h) pole position speed . The race ended for him when his motor blew up on the fourth lap , and he finished last (23rd) . Owner Pat Santello was looking for a driver to replace Larry Rice for his CART team at the following race at Watkins Glen International , so he gave Richmond a test at Willow Spring where he had previously set the student record . Santello hired Richmond , who then qualified 15th fastest for the event and finished in eighth place , the best of his IndyCar career . Richmond raced in three more events that season .

After crashing during the first day of qualifying for the 1980 Indianapolis 500 , Richmond nevertheless obtained the 19th starting position in the race . He worked his way up to the top 10 during the race , led a lap , and finished ninth as he ran out of fuel at the end of the race . To the delight of the crowd , winner Johnny Rutherford gave him a ride back to the pits . He was named the 1980 Indianapolis 500 Rookie of the Year . " I busted up a few Indy cars right after that , " he said . " Milwaukee , Mid @-@ Ohio . . . at Michigan I cut one in two . I was afraid my racing career would come to a halt . So when I got an offer to drive stock cars , I took it , and it turned out I liked driving them better . "

= = = NASCAR = = =

Pocono Raceway President Joseph Mattioli III convinced Richmond to make the change to stock car racing on the NASCAR circuit . Richmond made his first NASCAR start two months after winning the Indianapolis 500 Rookie of the Year award . He debuted at the Coca @-@ Cola 500 at Pocono on July 27 , 1980 , finishing 12th in a D. K. Ulrich @-@ owned Chevrolet . That season , he competed in five events , with two DNFs (did not finish) and three 12th @-@ place finishes . Overall , he finished the 1980 season 41st in points .

Richmond raced for three teams in 1981 . He started the season by competing in 15 events for Ulrich . He had his first career top 10 finish , taking sixth place at Talladega Superspeedway , soon followed by a seventh @-@ place finish at Texas World Speedway . After Kenny Childers hired him away from Ulrich mid @-@ season , Richmond had top 10 finishes at Pocono and Bristol . For the final seven races of the season , he drove for Bob Rogers and had a top 10 finish at Dover

International Speedway . Overall for the season , Richmond had six top 10 finishes to place 16th in season points .

Richmond started 1982 without a ride before getting a one @-@ race deal to drive for Billie Harvey at the Rockingham track . Richmond completed 112 laps of the 492 @-@ lap event to finish 31st , retiring from the race with engine problems . For the following event , Richmond was hired to drive J.D. Stacy 's No. 2 car . In his first race for the team , Richmond earned his first career top 5 finish when he placed fifth at Darlington Raceway . Returning to Pocono , he finished second , before winning his first race on the road course at Riverside , California the following week . Later that season , he earned his first pole position at Bristol . The tour returned to Riverside for the final race of the season where Richmond won his second race , sweeping both events at the track . Benny Parsons said that " watching Richmond go through the Esses was unbelievable " . For the season , Richmond had twelve top 10s , two wins , and one pole to finish 26th in points .

In 1983 , Richmond began racing for Raymond Beadle whom he had known before he started racing . He returned to the three @-@ cornered Pocono racetrack , earning his first oval victory . During the season , he accumulated four pole positions (Darlington , Pocono , Charlotte , and Atlanta) , one win (Pocono) , and fifteen top 10s on his way to finishing tenth in season points . He made his first appearance in a NASCAR Busch Series (now Nationwide Series) car , but did not finish any of the three races he entered that season .

Esquire magazine named Richmond as one of " the best of the new generation " in 1984 . That year he had one win at North Wilkesboro Speedway and second @-@ place finishes at Dover , Darlington and Riverside . Richmond finished the 1984 season 12th in points , with 11 finishes in the top 10 and in six in the top 5 . In 1985 , the final season that Richmond competed for Beadle , his best finish was a second @-@ place run at Bristol . He ended the season 11th in points with 13 Top 10s in 28 races . In the Busch Series , he qualified at the pole position in the two races he entered , and won the Charlotte race .

Richmond joined Hendrick Motorsports in 1986 , where he teamed up with veteran crew chief Harry Hyde . It took the team until the middle of the season to gel . Richmond had suffered a 64 @-@ race winless streak that was finally broken at the Van Scoy Diamond Mine 500 at Pocono in June 1986 . After two straight second @-@ place finishes at Charlotte and Riverside , Richmond started the Pocono event in third place inside the second row . That race saw a caution for rain with five laps left before the halfway point . NASCAR wanted the cars to get to the halfway point to make the race official , so the sanctioning body had the drivers slowly circle the track . It took the drivers 26 minutes to complete the laps , and the rain was so heavy that some drivers had to look out their side windows because they could not see out their windshields . Two hours later , the track had dried and the race resumed with Richmond in third . After Richmond 's car was adjusted to remove the " push " , the car was more to his liking . Because his radio did not work , he was unable to communicate with his crew chief , Hyde , and he made his final pit stop with 37 laps left . Hyde worried that Richmond had stopped a lap too early to ensure that he would have enough fuel to make it to the end . After Richmond took the lead with 30 laps left in the race , Dale Earnhardt made up three seconds on Richmond 's five @-@ second lead . With four laps to go , Buddy Arrington spun in a three @-@ car accident . The remaining laps of the race where completed slowly under caution and Richmond took the checkered flag for the victory . He had led 97 laps , including the final 30 , taking his first victory in a Rick Hendrick car .

The tour returned to Pocono a month later , and Richmond battled for another victory in a fog @-@ shortened event . In the final 8 @-@ lap sprint , Richmond competed in a three @-@ car battle with Geoff Bodine and Ricky Rudd . Richmond crossed the finish line beside Rudd , winning the race by 0 @. @ 05 seconds . He notched four more victories that season , and over a span of twelve races , Richmond earned three second @-@ place finishes , and six wins . The National Motorsports Press Association named him Co @-@ Driver of the Year with Earnhardt after Richmond accumulated 13 top 5 finishes and 16 in the top 10 . He had a career @-@ best third @-@ place finish in points after winning seven events in 1986 , in what was his last full NASCAR season .

= = Illness and death = =

Richmond fell ill the day after the 1986 NASCAR annual banquet during a promotional trip to New York . He was not well enough to begin the 1987 NASCAR season despite lengthy hospitalization in Cleveland and further rest at home ; when Richmond missed the Daytona 500 , his condition was reported as double pneumonia . Media later reported that he had tested positive for acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) . He returned to Pocono for the Miller High Life 500 during the middle of the year . Starting third , he led by the fifth lap and ultimately led 82 laps , including the final 46 , to win the race by eight car @-@ lengths over Bill Elliott . In the middle of the race , Richmond 's car suffered gearbox problems . Because he could use only fourth (high) gear , he had to use that gear to slowly exit the pits . Richmond was emotional after the victory , saying , " I had tears in my eyes when I took the checkered flag . Then every time anyone congratulated me , I started bawling again . " Richmond earned a victory in the next race at Riverside , and made his final 1987 start at Michigan International Speedway 's Champion Spark Plug 400 that August , finishing 29th with a blown engine . He resigned from Hendrick Motorsports in September 1987 .

Although Richmond attempted a comeback in 1988 , NASCAR suspended him for testing positive for banned substances . The substances were identified as Sudafed , a non @-@ prescription over @-@ the @-@ counter allergy medication , and Advil , an over @-@ the @-@ counter pain reliever . In April 1988 , Richmond sued NASCAR over the suspension . Although he retested later that year and was reinstated , he could not find a car to drive . In his final public appearance in February 1988 , Richmond denied that he abused drugs and said that a mistake had been made in his drug test . His suit with NASCAR was settled out @-@ of @-@ court , the terms sealed .

Richmond withdrew into his condo in Florida . There were by then rumors of HIV and AIDS , which he denied . He was later hospitalized in West Palm Beach .

ESPN sent a get @-@ well @-@ soon card to Richmond when it aired the July 1989 NASCAR race at Pocono . The television network showed highlights of Richmond 's victory at the track from 1986 . " Tim had Hollywood good looks and the charisma of Tom Cruise , " said his friend Dr. Jerry Punch . " There he was in victory lane with the team all around him and beauty queens hanging all over him . It was important for the people at the hospital to see Tim the way he really was , when he was healthy and handsome and vital , not the way he was as they saw him every day in the hospital . "

On August 13 , 1989 , Richmond died at the age of 34 , about two years after his final NASCAR race . He was buried in Ashland , Ohio .

The secrecy surrounding the circumstance of his death caused speculation for several days . At the time , Punch stated that Richmond had been hospitalized due to a motorcycle accident , though it is unlikely that Richmond had the strength to ride a motorcycle during his last months . Ten days after his death , on August 23 , the Richmond family held a press conference to reveal that Richmond died from complications from AIDS , which he acquired from an unknown woman . Richmond 's physician , Dr. David Dodson , said : " There 's no way of knowing who that woman was . Tim was a celebrity with a lot of charisma , a handsome guy . He naturally attracted a lot of women . " Punch later claimed that more than 90 drivers and personnel underwent HIV testing in the wake of Richmond 's death .

= = Legacy = =

In 1990 , a few months after Richmond 's death , Washington television station WJLA @-@ TV and reporter Roberta Baskin reported that Dr. Forest Tennant , who was then the National Football League 's drug adviser , " falsified drug tests " that ultimately helped shorten Richmond 's NASCAR career . Baskin reported that sealed court documents and interviews showed Tennant and NASCAR used " allegedly false drug @-@ test results in 1988 to bar Richmond from racing " . Baskin also stated that NASCAR had targeted Richmond , requesting that Tennant establish a substance @-@ abuse policy with Richmond in mind . A series of drug tests and falsely reported positive results shortly before the 1988 Daytona 500 kept Richmond from driving in what was to have been his last big race ... " , the report said . The New York Times published the findings . While neither Tennant nor NASCAR supplied an official response at the time , NASCAR did confirm that they were seeking

to replace Tennant .
The Ashland County Sports Hall of Fame inducted Richmond in their second class in 1996 . In 1998 , NASCAR named Richmond one of its 50 greatest drivers of all time . He was inducted into the International Motorsports Hall of Fame in 2002 . The Mansfield Motorsports Park ARCA Re / Max Series race in 2009 was named the Tim Richmond Memorial ARCA Re / Max 250 in honor of the area native . The race at Mansfield was co @-@ promoted by Mattioli 's son Joseph Mattioli III .
The documentary film Tim Richmond : To The Limit was produced as part of ESPN 's 30 for 30 series with a premiere date of October 19 , 2010 .

= = Motorsports career results = =

= = = NASCAR = = =

(key) (Bold ? Pole position awarded by qualifying time . Italics ? Pole position earned by points standings or practice time . * ? Most laps led .)

= = = = Winston Cup Series = = = =

= = = = = Daytona 500 = = = = =

= = = = Busch Series = = = =