

ROY LESLIE



Born in Denver in 1914, Roy Leslie was hungry for action when Tom Holden and J E Kimbrough introduced midget racing at the Merchant's Park baseball field on South Broadway Street. Equipped with a Harley Davidson 45 powered car, he co-owned with Vernon "Cannonball" Weir, Roy soon found racing much to his liking. Not only did he like it – he was good at it. In 1938 racing at both Merchants Park and the new Lakeside Speedway, Leslie took the Black Diamond Coal to a slew of wins, including 4 in a row late in the year to secure the Denver Midget Racing Association title. When the American Automobile Association took over sanctioning duties in 1939, Roy never missed a beat finishing in the fourth position in points posting 8 feature victories.

In 1940 the Rocky Mountain Midget Racing Association was born and Leslie was one of the driving forces behind the formation of the club. President Lloyd Axle was impossible to unseat from the top spot of the podium although Leslie ways always in the hunt. Indeed, by 1941 he scored five wins and served notice that he was hungry for another crown. His car was a beautiful Offy powered- Curly Wetteroth built piece owned by Julius "Buzz" Bussard, with assistance offered by brother-in-law Rodney Barringer. It all came together for Roy in 1942 as he won 12 feature events, including the season ending 100-lap affair in front of 7000 fans. It would be the last race until racing returned in 1946.

While Leslie's days as a driver were essentially over he would never stray far from the sport. He returned as a car owner with friend and partner Bill Kenz – and with help from Wynn oil – the car was soon a frontrunner. With the talented Johnny Tolan at the controls, the Continental Airlines team would capture the 1947 RMMRA championship in a year where Leslie would also serve as club president. In time any number of great drivers would race for the Kenz-Leslie team including Joe Giba, Gib Lilly, Buddy Shay and Cal Niday. In an organization and region that offered a plethora of legendary owners – Kenz and Leslie are considered giants.

The relationship between Kenz and Leslie extended well beyond the racetrack – indeed – Kenz and Leslie Distributing, remains a thriving business now three generations deep.

