

Several years ago there was a TV commercial for Valvoline motor oil that showed an ultrasound image of a baby in the womb. The baby began to move in the image, grasping an imaginary steering wheel and then pressing the right foot "to the floor" as viewers heard the sound of a revving engine. In the commercial the baby was supposed to be Mark Martin, but it could easily have been Brent Dragon.

Born the son of Harmon "Beaver" Dragon and the nephew of Bobby Dragon, Brent's future as a racer was carved in stone at birth. During the 1960s and 70s, brothers Beaver and Bobby raced up and down the East Coast, winning races and fans at the same time. The triumphs of the Dragon brothers are legendary in New England, as are the wrecks, like Bobby's wild flip during the last race at Catamount and Beaver's hard crash at Thunder Road.

And then there are the wins. Lots of wins. Brent's first memory of racing comes from when he went with his mom to watch his famous father. "I can remember going to Plattsburgh, New York in the early 70s with my mom lugging us up and down the bleachers while my dad raced," he remembers. "I always fell asleep at the races. How she got me and my sister back to the hauler to head home I'll never know."

The younger Dragon moved from spectator to competitor via a stop in motocross, and then it was on to stock cars. The majority of his success has come in a late model under the ACT and/or Thunder Road and Airborne banners. However, he has also tried his talents in other forms of racing, such as with the now-defunct PRO Truck series.

Dragon lists his triumphs as follows: "The biggest accomplishments so far are the three track championships (at Airborne) and wins in the Spring Green and Fall Foliage (races at Airborne) and The Labor Day Classic and The Memorial Day Classic (both at Thunder Road). I would say those are four of what I consider the big five races."

Unlike many racers, Brent Dragon has never been one to take "checkers or wreckers." Like his Vermont neighbor and longtime friend, Jean-Paul Cyr, Dragon is a calculating driver, doing his best with what the circumstances present him that day and forging on to get the best finish he can. This

thinking man's approach to racing doesn't result in hundreds of victories or dramatic banzai passes. What it does result in are consistent finishes, saving quality equipment and being a perpetual contender in the season-long championship-hunt.

"Racing is a hobby for most people, and probably one out of every 5000 people ever get a shot to move on," Dragon explains. "There is not enough money being paid out to wreck your racecar week after week, and when you are wrecking your racecar you cannot make it faster because you're fixing it all week."

At six-foot-two-inches tall, Brent Dragon presents a rather looming image. However, a gentler giant has never lived. Like Mark Martin, Brent often sounds almost apologetic when discussing his success. In victory lanes he is quick to mention his sponsors, his crew, the track and just about anyone else but himself. His words are well chosen and tempered so as not to be regretted at a later date. Dragon is a handsome, clean-cut, well-mannered and well-spoken guy, something all too hard to find in the world of weekend racers. His image on and off the track, combined with his willingness to appear on behalf of his sponsor and understanding of what pleases a sponsor, have resulted in a relationship with Kinney Drugs that began in 2003.

When not at the track, Dragon and his team are likely to be at a sponsor appearance, presenting a very professional image to fans. After each race the car is immaculately restored to its showroom appearance. All team members have matching uniforms, the car hauler is decked out in full graphics and the familiar Kinney Drugs orange can't be missed in any pit area that hosts Dragon and his crew. There is always time to sign autographs for fans, and even in the midst of pit activity Dragon is always available to talk to whomever happens to stop by and see him. And this, despite the demands the competition places upon him.

"People would probably be surprised to know how much time I spend on working with the racecar and trying to learn the newest setups for the racecar," he says. "The cars change so much every month. You hear of a new thing that people are doing and if you don't keep up with it you're not

going to be able to compete."

It's been said that behind any good man is a good woman, and Brent Dragon's story is no different. Wife June has been an anchor to his career and is known to anyone with a scanner as the dominant voice in Dragon's helmet as he circles the track. June can be found at any event where her husband is competing and shares his vision of Dragon Motorsports as a quality racing operation. Whether it be spotting, sponsor relations, greeting fans or anything to do with the racecar, Brent and June are inseparable at the track. "June and I have been married for twelve years and she is definitely my biggest supporter," says Dragon. "I could not have done it without her. Her sister introduced me to her at the racetrack and we've been together ever since."

The Dragon name has not always been an advantage. "I think the Dragon name has hurt me more than helped," Brent Dragon admits. "People assume everything was handed to me because of Beaver and Bobby. I struggled just like everyone else and I still have to work on my car every night of the week, unlike a lot of the people we race with. The other thing is I have a hard time finding help. Everyone thinks we have a lot of help. The guys I have I know are great and have been with us for years but I would like more help during the week so I could do more stuff with my wife and family. They have given up a lot of stuff for me so that I can race."

Having retired from his own racing, the senior Dragon now accompanies his son to all of his races. Cousin Scott Dragon often has the help of his father Bobby, making the pits at an ACT event a Dragon family reunion.

In another comparison to Mark Martin, Dragon is too often the humble man who finishes second, not yet having the privilege of hoisting the ACT championship trophy at the end of the season. Each year he is in the top five of ACT points-runners with at least a race-win or two for the season. Would his career be significant without the elusive championship? Absolutely. Does Brent hunger for the ultimate reward for a hard season of racing? He wouldn't be a true racer if he didn't. And the obvious desire for an ACT championship is not Dragon's only piece of unfinished business.

"Before I am completely out of racing I would like to win The Milk Bowl and race in The Oxford 250," he declares unsurprisingly. He will get the chance to race in The Oxford 250 in 2007 when the race becomes a late model instead of a pro stock event.

Yet if Dragon walked away from racing tomorrow, it wouldn't be the lack of a championship or a specific victory that would bother him.

"The only regrets I have in racing are that I wish I would have been more outgoing in talking to people. I would have liked to have raced for a team owner. I would like to drive for someone some day but I would still like to help with the setup. "But if this never happens," Brent Dragon concludes, "I have still met a lot of great people throughout the country, and that's what it's all about."

On October 1, Brent Dragon finally caught the one that kept getting away, winning the Milk Bowl at Thunder Road.