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Silent Speedways of the Carolinas: The Grand National Histories of 29 Former Tracks

Perry Allen Wood

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NASCAR held its first Strictly Stock race in Charlotte on June 19, 1949, and, in the following decades, dozens of large and small tracks throughout the Carolinas were home to a major NASCAR event. Called Grand National from 1950-1970, NASCAR's top circuit became the Winston Cup in 1971, and most of the dirt and small tracks were subsequently gutted from the schedule. Although a handful of those speedways tenuously held on through exploding popularity, and an influx of big corporate dollars, the transition to metropolitan markets and super speedways was inevitable. Some of the original tracks, like the North Wilkesboro Motor Speedway, still stand testament to the sport's not-too-distant past. Others, like the Charlotte Speedway, are long gone, leaving only memories and photographs. This is the story of every racetrack in North and South Carolina that held at least one big time race through 1971, but is no longer used for auto racing. Seven are one-race wonders, while others are as much racing legends as the sport's past champions. Chapters cover each track's big time history, from early background through its racing years to its current status. Included are the thrilling tales of the personalities and machines that shaped NASCAR's early days. Statistics chart every track's past winners, records, and wins by make. The 151 photographs give the reader a virtual tour of speedways that are often inaccessible or nonexistent.

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