

Jerry Van Kempen Viking Speedway's Pioneer Track Announcer

Jerry is a life long Alexandria resident and Businessman, but also well known as a Central Minn Radio and TV personality. Jerry became involved in Auto Racing in 1953 with the West Central Racing Assn., which raced in Alex, Fergus Falls, Morris and Wadena Mn. The West Central speedway Assn. was the only other race Assn. to race in Alex and did pave the way for the Viking speedway to emerge in 1965. Jerry became the Track Announcer at these tracks and served until 1960 when the Assn. dissolved. Jerry also was a car owner and served as President for this Assn. during these 7 years.

When the Viking Speedway opened in 1965, the Speedway Board asked Jerry to handle the announcer duties, which he accepted, thus he became the "*Original Voice of the Viking Speedway*". Jerry was the Speedway's voice for 6 Race seasons or until Jim Johnson took over the duties in 1971. Jim spent most of the 1970 season being groomed by Jerry to be the future Speedway announcer.

Jerry was not only the Viking speedway's original announcer, but he brought with him years of being involved in Auto racing as a announcer, and car competitor, which was invaluable to the 1965 Original Board of Directors. Jerry did advise and help in any way he could to insure the first race seasons were not the speedway's last. Jerry was instrumental in getting the speedway to change the Sunday Afternoon Race events to today's very successful Saturday nite show.

In these First 6 seasons as the track announcer, Jerry's Wit, Humor and experience entertained the race fans and no doubt influenced and had a effect on the success of today's Race Program!

Jerry's voice is one of Central Minnesota's most recognized as he has not only been involved in Auto Racing, but he has been Master of Ceremonies (MC) for just about every event in this area. As noted he has been on TV and Radio for years and has co-hosted the popular local TV show, "*Jingle Bells*" for decades. Most recently Jerry spent 18 years as The Voice of "The Red Baron Pizza Squadron". Red Baron Squadron is a National Air Show and a division of Schwan Food Products in Marshall Mn. Jerry and his wife Margaret have traveled the entire United States doing practically every military base and large Air show in the country.