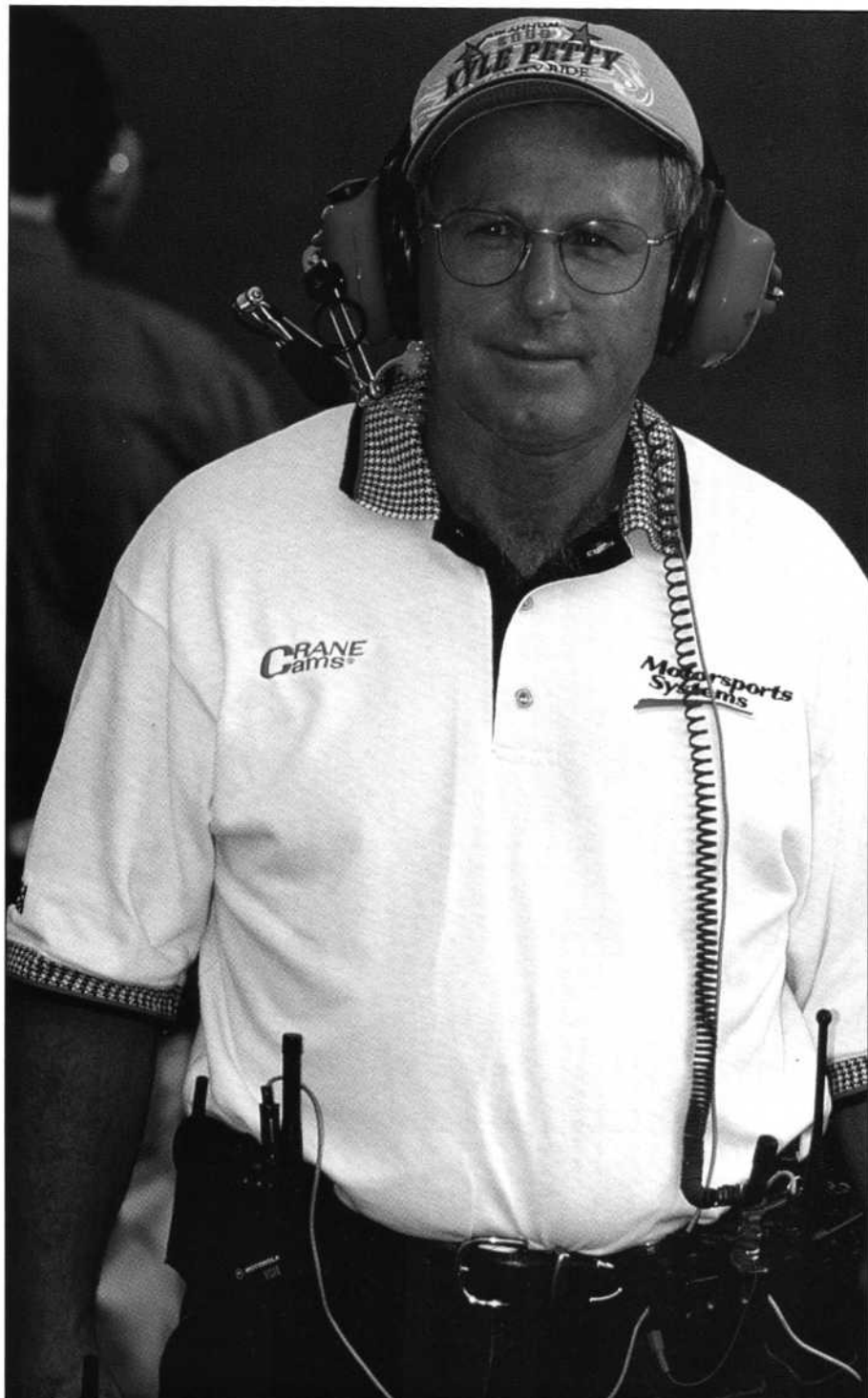


'Mr. Wizard'

by
Art Weinstein



How smart is Nelson Crozier? Well, he once figured out a problem even rocket scientists couldn't solve. He can chat at length about any number of topics, from politics and literature to computer programming.

In short, he's the guy you'd mark down as the "Phone a Friend" option if you were on TV's "Who Wants To Be A Millionaire."

Crozier, known as "Mr. Wizard" around the NASCAR circuit for his vast electronics and mechanical expertise, was blessed with a lot more gray matter than most people. He could have put his IQ to use in any number of fields: Brain surgery, maybe, or as a best-selling writer (he did, in fact, major in English in college).

Instead, Crozier chose racing. If nothing else, his career choice has kept him a very busy man. Crozier's Mooresville, N.C.-based company, Nelson Specialties, manufactures and tests electrical equipment such as wiring harnesses and ignition coils for scores of race teams. By Crozier's estimates, nearly 80 percent of the teams in the NASCAR Winston Cup, Busch and Craftsman Truck Series and other top racing divisions such as ARCA use his company's equipment or services in some capacity.

That's just part of his job. At each Winston Cup race site, Crozier serves as a consultant and troubleshooter extraordinaire for race teams, the TV broadcast crew and NASCAR officials. His duties are incredibly varied. One minute, he could be repairing the hookup for NASCAR's garage area Internet camera. The next, he

Photo: Jim Fluharty