



# LEVI JONES

## Driver Biography

Having won three USAC National Sprint Series championships in the last five seasons, it's safe to say Levi Jones, driver of the No. 20 Bass Pro Shops/Armor All/Chevy entry for Tony Stewart Racing (TSR), is an odd bird.

That's because all three titles came in odd-numbered years – 2005, 2007 and 2009.

So, a fitting battle cry for Jones and the No. 20 team as they look to successfully defend their title for the first time in 2010 would be something along the lines of, "Don't get mad, get even."

"Yeah, things obviously went pretty well again last year as we came away with another championship," Jones said. "But we're definitely trying to buck the trend of only winning this thing in odd-numbered years. I don't think there's anything to it, but it would be something to be able to get one back-to-back."

It's not that Jones was far off the mark in the even-numbered years he's driven for TSR. He was runner-up to 2006 Josh Wise and runner-up again in 2008 to the title-winning Jerry Coons, Jr. That's not too shabby for the 27-year-old from Olney, Ill., who won his first Sprint Series championship in 2005 while driving for team owner Scott Benick before joining TSR for the 2006 season.

Now in his fifth year with the organization, Jones looks to capture his fourth Sprint Series championship, which would tie the career record set by Steve Butler in 1990. And he feels all the ingredients are in place after a most satisfying title run in 2009.

"Racing throws so many curveballs at you, mentally and physically, that to be somewhere for five years in this business is really something," Jones said. "Entering this season, we're probably more prepared than we ever have been as a team. For the most part, everything is the same – same engine, same types of cars. We looked over last year's results and some of the stuff where we thought we could get better, and we brainstormed some ideas about getting better in situations, and build on what we had last year. It's the first time since I've been here that everything's remained intact for the following season. It makes me excited to only have to fine-tune things and not have to build new relationships and learn new equipment and things like that.

"Last year's championship was probably the most satisfying one for me because it was just a little bit different. We started off really badly. We were down in the points after our West Coast swing. We came back to the shop and kind of changed a few personnel, had lots of meetings, and when all was said and done, we had everything we needed to win races and win championships. We changed things to get us back on the right track. Luckily, we were on same page after that, had lots of confidence in each other, and from March through October, it was satisfying because we were able to win the most races in the series, have the best average finish, we won (Indiana) Sprint Week, which is a big event in the middle of all the major championship stuff. I was really proud of all my guys, all my team that didn't let that negative stuff affect our performance. We stayed the course and we came away with the big trophy at the end of the year."

Jones, who won four USAC Sprint Series feature races and finished the season with 16 top-five and 20 top-10s in 34 events in 2009, also has his eyes on chasing the USAC Silver Crown championship driving the No. 10 Bass Pro Shops/Armor All/Chevy machine with new teammate Bryan Clauson in the No. 22 Bass Pro Shops/Armor All/Chevy.

He took part in eight Silver Crown races in 2009 with best finishes of second at Iowa Speedway in July and third at Manzanita Speedway in February and at the Illinois State Fairgrounds in August. He added another 14 USAC Midget Series events with a best finish of fourth at Knoxville (Iowa) Raceway.

Jones' runner-up Sprint Car season of 2008 featured three fast time awards and two victories along the way, one coming at Brownstown (Ind.) Speedway and the second at the Terre Haute (Ind.) Action Track, both in the month of May. He had 11 top-five finishes and 15 top-10 finishes in all. He also finished fourth in the Silver Crown championship and sixth in the Midget Series.

The 2007 racing season, Jones' first of two championship runs with TSR, was full of defining moments. Not only was it his first with his new team, it also was the first for team sponsor Chevrolet. Jones won four Sprint Series races in 2007 and added another 11 top-five and 21 top-10 finishes. He was voted to the American Auto Racing Writers and Broadcasters (AARWBA) All-America Second Team.

Jones was also in control of the USAC Sprint Series standings for the majority of the 2007 season. He took the lead following the first race at Lawrenceburg Speedway and never dropped out of the top-five at any point during the season. Jones reclaimed the championship lead for the final time during the series' Indiana Sprint Week event at Lawrenceburg Speedway on July 12.

“When I won my first Sprint Car title in 2005, it was a huge milestone in my career,” said Jones. “Winning a second championship meant just as much as the first title did, maybe more. I am so glad we were able to finish the season that way. It was really exciting to be able to present Chevy with its first USAC championship. The TSR team didn’t give up, and its hard work and dedication put me in a position to win at every event that season.”

The 2007 racing season also held another milestone for Jones, as he captured his first career USAC National Midget Car Series victory at the Plymouth (Wis.) Dirt Track on September 7. Gaining momentum in the late stages of the season, Jones announced himself as a threat in the series by posting several strong finishes, including a second-place finish in the Belleville Midget Nationals. Ending the season ranked seventh in the USAC Midget Series point standings, Jones is sure to be a title contender in 2008.

Jones made three USAC Silver Crown Series starts for TSR in 2007, as the team once again only competed on the dirt. Posting a best finish of ninth in the “American Revolution Weekend” at Eldora Speedway in Rossburg Ohio on September 22, Jones notched his second series top-10 finish of the season. He also faced a heartbreaking defeat at the Illinois State Fairground in USAC Silver Crown Series, as he was leading the 100-mile event with two laps to go when the right rear tire on the No. 10 TSR/Chevy/Maxim gave out, relegating Jones to a 23<sup>rd</sup> place finish.

The 2006 racing season was a milestone year for Jones as he was named to drive for the TSR stable. He kicked off the season with a USAC/CRA Sprint Car Series victory at Manzanita Speedway in Phoenix in January in his pursuit of back-to-back National Sprint Car Series championships. Over the course of the season, Jones racked up 11 top-five finishes and 26 top-10 finishes but fell just short of earning the title, finishing as the series runner-up to his then TSR teammate Wise.

The 2006 racing season also saw Jones take on his first full year of Midget competition. Consistent improvement and top-10 finishes aided him to a sixth-place finish in the Midget standings. Jones also competed in five dirt Silver Crown events, and took part in a historic battle with Wise in the finish of the 54<sup>th</sup> Hoosier Hundred at the Indiana State Fairgrounds in May. Coming to the stripe just behind his teammate, Jones earned his season-best finish in the event.

Jones’ path to Tony Stewart Racing began in 2005, where he commenced an all-out assault on the Sprint Car Series. Scoring a series-high five victories, Jones also recorded a clean sweep of the Tony Hulman Classic at the Terre Haute Action Track. He also set a new non-Winged Sprint car track record at Eldora Speedway during the USAC 4-Crown Nationals, reeling off a lap of 14.750 seconds at the legendary half-mile facility. The then-23-year-old went on to win the Sprint Car Series portion of the event.

Winning four of five events in the inaugural O’Reilly Sprint Bandits “Tour ‘N Topless” series, Jones was also crowned the series’ first champion in 2005. He also won the Ultimate Challenge at Southern Iowa Speedway in Oskaloosa. At the season-ending USAC national awards banquet, Jones was honored as the 2005 Earl’s Fast Qualifier Sprint Car Champion. Another jewel in his 2005 crown was being named “Driver of the Year” by the North American Non-Winged Sprint Car Poll voting panel.

Jones earned USAC’s “Most Improved Driver” award in 2001 and finished third in the series’ Sprint Car point championship in 2003. In 2004, Jones began to attract national attention by winning the USAC Indiana Sprint Week title. He went on to win the Sprint Car National event in front of a NASCAR audience in the fall of 2004 in Concord, N.C., taking the victory at The Dirt Track at Charlotte Motor Speedway. He also earned the 2004 Earl’s Fast Qualifier championship for his efforts in the Sprint Car Series competition, and finished the season ranked fourth in the series’ championship standings.

Making the switch to full-time Sprint car racing in 2000, Jones earned his first USAC fast qualifier award at Tri-State Speedway in Haubstadt, Ind., during an Indiana Sprint Week event. While competing in Modified Midget events early in his career, Jones got his start in full-size Sprint cars in 1998 at age 16. Competing weekly at local race tracks in the Midwest, Jones won the 1998 Red Hill Speedway Sprint Car Series track championship.

Jones currently resides in Brownsburg, Ind. His parents still live in Olney, where Jones was a standout on the East Richmond High School basketball team. Jones is actively involved in the family business – a growing chain of farm and home retail stores based in the Midwest called Rural King Supply. When not racing, Jones likes to spend time with his family and enjoys playing pool.