



Jimmy Carr: Biography

Birthdate: October 10, 1962

Hometown: Maple Ridge, British Columbia

Residence: Brownsburg, Ind.

Spouse: Judy

Jimmy Carr has always found a way to do what he loves. There's never been a goal so far out of reach that it didn't seem attainable. His determination and willingness to do whatever it takes, has led the British Columbia native from being a kid driving trucks in and out of quarries full of sand and rocks to a man that is behind one of the most successful racing organizations in all of motorsports.

He, like so many in the business, caught the racing bug early in life and it's still just as strong today. The 50-year-old's drive and ability to achieve sustained success has led to him being part of the 2013 class of inductees into the Canadian Motorsports Hall of Fame in late September this year.

As race director of Tony Stewart Racing, not only does he oversee an organization that annually challenges for championships with the World of Outlaws (WoO) STP Sprint Car Series and United States Auto Club (USAC), but he also serves as crew chief for Tony Stewart's ambitious winged sprint car schedule of more than 50 races per season.

Since early in the 2011 season, Stewart has made huge strides as a competitor in the world's best sprint car division and Carr has been right alongside. Stewart's first career WoO A-Feature victory came at Ohsweken (Ontario) Speedway back in July 2011, and it was hard to determine who was more ecstatic, Stewart or Carr.

The lessons Carr learned on his journey that led him to joining forces with Stewart and the TSR organization back in 2000, along with a number of the things he's experienced over the past dozen years, continue pushing Carr to greater heights.

"It's been a tremendous climb to get here," Carr said. "There was no road map or path leading me here from Maple Ridge to where I am today. I got hooked on racing and just never wanted it to end. I always tell people that I had my last real job in 1990 and ever since then, I've just been able to do what I love."

Despite achieving the elite level in short-track racing on dirt, Carr began his career in drag racing. His first experiences in motorsports as a competitive included him learning the fastest way down a quarter mile strip of pavement in the Seattle area. When Frank Carr, Jimmy's father, got wind of what was happening, he told his 16-year-old son that if he was interested in his racing career continuing, then he was going to have to be on dirt.

"My dad wouldn't have any part of the drag racing stuff, because he was an oval track racer," Carr continued. "So, he talked me into selling my dragster, and buying a car we could run at the local dirt track. I still have a picture of it. It probably weighed about 4,000 pounds. You could've gone to war with that thing. It had no power steering and heavy old steel wheels. We took it to Skagit Speedway (in Alger, Wash.) and started racing at there as much as we could."

After a few years of racing the modified, Carr was ready to step up in class, so he bought his first winged sprint car. In 1986, he was competing in the 410 class at Skagit. The weather in the area was almost tougher than the competition. He was lucky if he raced every other week. That just wasn't enough for him, so he began making the 18-hour trip each way every weekend to California. Carr was not only the driver, but he was the mechanic, truck driver and took care of paying all the bills. He still had a regular job and had to work on his racecar at nights in order to be ready to head back the following weekend.

Two years of racing in California helped polish his skills to the point where he was ready to branch out even farther. The 1991 season was one he'll never forget. He traveled the entire World of Outlaws schedule and closed the season being named WoO Rookie of the Year. He still credits things he learned during those first years as the foundation for the success he's had.

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“I just learned that you had to have an incredible work ethic,” Carr said. “Back then, I built all my own motors. I built everything. I looked after all my own stuff. If my stuff wasn’t kept in good shape, it didn’t get to the next race. It may be the truck. It may be the trailer. It may be the air compressor. Everything had to be paid attention to. I learned how to work on everything. We slept in the truck most of the time and every one in a while, we’d get a hotel room. It didn’t matter, we were doing everything we could to keep racing.”

Unfortunately, the 1992 season was blemished by an accident that ended up breaking Carr’s back. He was racing at Bloomington (Ind.) Speedway and landed awkwardly following a flip brought on by contact with another car. He went back to British Columbia and spent most of that season recovering. Carr returned to action in Arizona competing in the televised series from Manzanita Speedway. He spent the next three seasons (1993-1995) traveling the country racing as much as he could.

It wasn’t until the 1996 season that he would get back on the Outlaw tour full-time. He drove David and Gary McManus’ car, which was based out of Dallas, Texas. The team operated on a limited budget and raced as long as they could before running out of funding. At that point, Carr returned to California to drive for Maury Williams and completed the 1996 season and continued driving the No. 0 in 1997. It was in August at the Knoxville Nationals, when Carr was approached about driving Dennis Roth’s Beef Packers machine.

The call was a turning point. Not because he accepted the opportunity to drive the No. 82, but because he turned it down and recommended they put Danny Lasoski in the ride. Lasoski took it, and Carr found himself without a car to drive for the 1998 season, so he decided to become Lasoski’s crew chief on the No. 83. The tandem was potent right from the start and by the time the Knoxville Nationals rolled around they were hitting on all cylinders. Carr helped Lasoski win his first Knoxville Nationals in the Beefpackers No. 83 exactly one year after turning down the chance to drive the car himself.

“I was disappointed that I wasn’t driving, but I looked at it as a unique opportunity,” Carr recalled of that 1998 season. “I had never had the chance to work on new equipment. And everything that we needed, all we had to do was ask for it. Everything was top shelf. Even though I wasn’t driving it, I was around the best stuff that there was and I had never been in that position before. I was excited to experience that part.”

Despite having incredible success turning the wrenches, he was still a driver first. Carr jumped at the chance to get back behind the wheel in 1999. Joe Ray Blevins put him in his No. 21 car to start the season, and they had a fair amount of success racing with the Outlaws. The problem turned out being that Blevins’ son, Lance, wanted to get back behind the wheel, so Joe had to let Carr go. He found his next ride in the sprint car hot-bed of central Pennsylvania. He would drive Walt Dyer’s famous No. 461 Brickmobile car through the Knoxville Nationals. Even though he was still driving, he knew that there was another big bridge that he needed to cross.

“I was kind of disappointed that I lost the ride in the Blevins car, but it was a family deal,” Carr said. “That put the wheels in motion on something bigger. I started working with Tony (Stewart), (Danny) Lasoski and Tony Ross trying to build a team. By the end of the summer in 1999, I went to work for those three. They started bulldozing the land where we would build our shop. We did everything from the ground up. In the fall of 1999 through the spring of 2000, we started working to be ready for the 2001 World of Outlaws season. We built some cars and went to Florida for Speedweeks in February. Danny came down to drive them, and it was incredible. We won seven of the eight nights we raced. He took the lead in the eighth race, but a caution came out right after that and basically kept us from going eight for eight. Being that strong really was a huge deal for us. I actually drove the car at a few races in the Midwest during the year just testing some new things. We spent the fall of 2000 building our arsenal. Seven racecars, seven brand new Paul Kistler motors, secured sponsorship from J.D. Byrider and announced the team during a press conference in Las Vegas at the Outlaws’ season finale. In our first season as Tony Stewart Motorsports, we came out and won the 2001 Knoxville Nationals and the Outlaw championship.”

All of their hard work had paid off and the goal was continue winning Knoxville Nationals and WoO championships. During the 2002 season, things were rolling right along until Lasoski was involved in on-track accident in late July that sidelined him for three weeks. Their shot at a second consecutive WoO title was gone, but Lasoski returned in time to contend for the Knoxville Nationals. He came up two spots short, but one year later, they were once again the class of the field winning a second Knoxville Nationals for the organization. The dominance of sprint car racing’s biggest race continued in 2004 as the team won for the third time in their four-year existence.

There were many obstacles after that first season and from 2002 through 2005, Carr, Lasoski and the entire organization did their best to match that first year magic. Carr even recalls team owner Stewart wanting to be as big of a part of team as he could.

“Tony liked to be on top of what was going on,” Carr said. “He liked to have me call all the time, give him updates on what was going on, what we were doing. I’m just terrible about doing that. I really feel bad calling him, because I always feel like I’m bugging him. He’s got such a huge schedule. On the other side of it though, it just make him mad that nobody kept him up to speed. He would rather be distracted by us than not hearing anything about what was going on with our team. As it turned out, he basically told me he was going to fine me if I didn’t call him. After every race, it was going to be a \$100 fine if I didn’t call and check in.”

Carr's relationship with Stewart continued to get stronger as the team evolved. It became clear after a volatile 2005 season that a change was needed and Carr and Stewart were in agreement on the new direction the organization would take. The direction was to move forward with a new driver and relocate to Indianapolis. In 2003, Stewart branched his organization to include a team in the United States Auto Club (USAC) along with his Outlaw program. When the decision was made to start over following the 2005 season, Carr, Stewart and his management team came up with a plan. They quickly assembled enough parts and equipment to race in 2006 and by 2007, they moved into their new race shop in Brownsburg.

"We basically started from scratch again," Carr said. "We didn't have one moving part. We moved to Indianapolis, rented a shop, got enough stuff so we could build cars and got going. It happened to be the year the of the (World of Outlaws) split, so it was crazy anyway. We went with the (National Sprint Tour) NST Series. Paul McMahan drove the car. I think we had a great season for trying to start from scratch. We didn't have anything when we started. We weren't sure where everything was going at that point. I think Tony had it in his mind that he wanted to build a shop and have his USAC cars and the Outlaw team under the same roof. We rented a shop that first year and then purchased a piece of property and started construction."

The building process didn't end with the construction of 25,000-square foot race shop. Following a random conversation during an early June Outlaw race in Eagle, Neb., another turning point occurred for Tony Stewart Racing. Carr reached out to Danny Schatz, father and team owner of Donny Schatz who had just won his first Outlaw championship and Knoxville Nationals the season before and were on pace to do it again in 2007. A few weeks later, a deal was in place and starting in 2008, Tony Stewart Racing would have two full-time teams competing for the World of Outlaws championship.

"It was just exciting having Donny Schatz under our roof," Carr said. "That 2008 season was a dream come true. It doesn't get any better than that. Donny won the Knoxville Nationals and Outlaw championship. It reminded me so much of that first year we started in 2001. We won the Knoxville Nationals and the Outlaw championship and history was repeated. Here it was, like an instant replay. From being a driver and watching Donny, I knew how good he had become and that he has the capability of being as decorated as Steve Kinser by the time he's ready to be done sprint car racing. I can really see Donny staying on top for a long time, winning 10 Knoxville Nationals and many more Outlaw championships is definitely in the realm of possibility. There's no telling what records he can break still. I really wanted Tony to be part of helping Donny accomplish those kind of things."

After witnessing the success Schatz with TSR in 2008 and the championships being earned on the USAC side of the building, Carr transitioned into a race director role at TSR. Bringing the USAC side of the shop under his watch proved fruitful. The already potent USAC team that had earned the 2003 USAC National Sprint Car Series driver & owner championships with J.J. Yeley, followed by Josh Wise in 2006, continued to stay on top with Levi Jones winning the series title five times, with the 2007, 2009, 2010 and 2011 crowns coming with him behind the wheel of a TSR entry.

Both sides of the shop kept winning marquee races and series championships as Carr continued to evolve in his role with TSR. Overseeing the technical side of the operation as a whole, Carr would still go to the high-profile Outlaw races and USAC events, but most of his time was spent keeping teams on both side of the building prepared to win.

"I knew I could help the organization by being at the shop a little more so that was the direction we took," Carr said. "Most of these guys are hired because they are really good at what they do. They just need a good coach, and a good coach just makes sure everybody is prepared with everything they need when they get there. I want to make sure they have what they need to get the job done. It's kind of like everything has come full circle."

With Schatz winning a second consecutive WoO championship with TSR in 2009 and Jones earning consecutive USAC National sprint car titles with TSR, Carr was extremely busy keeping those teams on the championship path. And the titles continue come in rapid order. Jones went on to win the 2010 USAC National Sprint Car Series championship, as well as his first USAC Silver Crown Series championship. The 2011 season was a repeat performance by Jones & TSR as they again brought both championships home.

About the same time, Stewart began dabbling in winged sprint car racing himself. He raced mostly with a 360-cubic inch motor and with Carr's tutelage began making progress. By 2011, Stewart was up to speed with the 410 motors that the World of Outlaws teams complete with and his learning curve continued progressing at a rapid pace. Stewart admits that his first World of Outlaws win at Ohsweken in July 2011 was a dream come true. Coming back in 2012 and winning with the Outlaws first during the Silver Cup at Lernerville and then again at Ohsweken just underscored how far he had come and how the strength of one organization can be felt across the board.

"It's a dream come true to be able to take Tony to where he's at with winged sprint car racing right now," Carr said. "It was a struggle for him in the beginning. He kept holding his breath while driving. He didn't know how to breathe when he was in the car. He kept falling out of the seat. I really think Donny was the one who got him past that. He also started to get more confidence in himself and

that helped make it easier to breathe. The minute he got to that point, it was like a light switch went on and he became a guy to contend with. I forgot how much fun racing actually is when you're not chasing for points and a championship. We just show up at the track and try to win the race. That's why I started racing, and I get to do that again with Tony. It's really a lot of fun."

Carr and his wife, Judy, reside in Brownsburg, Ind.

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