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Levi Jones Repeats as USAC Silver Crown Champion

Tony Stewart Racing/Curb-Agajanian Earns Second Straight USAC Silver Crown Series Owner Title

TOLEDO, Ohio (Oct. 15, 2011) – Levi Jones joined some elite company Saturday afternoon by clinching his second consecutive USAC Traxxas Silver Crown Series championship by finishing seventh in the Rollie Beale 150 at Toledo Speedway. The Tony Stewart Racing (TSR) driver became only the fifth driver in USAC history to earn back-to-back Silver Crown titles.

The Olney, Ill. native joins Jack Hewitt (1986-1987), J.J. Yeley (2002-2003), Dave Steele (2004-2005) and Bud Kaeding (2006-2007) as repeat champions in the Silver Crown division, and he earned this year's title by driving the Tony Stewart/Curb-Agajanian Racing No. 10 Chevrolet/GM Performance Parts/Curb Records/Beast to top-10 finishes in all eight Silver Crown races.

It is the sixth Silver Crown title for car-owner Tony Stewart and his second with partner Curb-Agajanian. In addition to Jones' 2010 and 2011 titles, Stewart captured four consecutive Silver Crown titles from 2002 to 2005 as a co-owner with Bob East. This year's championship is Stewart's 11th as a USAC car owner and his 14th overall, as TSR has three championships in the World of Outlaws Sprint Car Series (2001, 2008 and 2009).

"This is another really exciting milestone in my career," Jones said after delivering a second Silver Crown title to Chevrolet and Curb Records and the first with GM Performance Parts. "To be a champion as part of Tony Stewart Racing and with Curb, Chevrolet and GM Performance Parts, this is what it's all about. Tony's built a great tradition in the Silver Crown series and for us to add another championship to his list of accomplishments feels special. Last year was the first time he won a Silver Crown title out of his own shop with just our team working on every aspect of the car. Coming back and doing it again this year just underscores the talent we have as an organization. I'm really proud of the entire TSR team and proud to be a part of it."

Jones entered Saturday's season finale at Toledo 12 points ahead of Jerry Coons, Jr. Jones qualified 12th and worked his way inside the top-10 during the first 30 laps, but he lost a cylinder during the middle stages of the race. Jones was forced to nurse an ailing engine during the final 50 circuits, and despite being lapped, he was able to finish seventh. Coons, Jr., qualified second and battled polesitter and eventual winner Kody Swanson early in the race. He fell to third when Jones' TSR teammate, Bryan Clauson, took over second as the race approached the 100-lap point. When Coons couldn't hold off Bobby East for third later in the race, Jones simply needed to finish the race seventh or better to outscore Coons for the title. Jones' seventh-place finish coupled with Coons' fourth-place result gave Jones a 408-405 advantage in the final standings.

"We had such a good season but, man, we had to overcome a lot today," Jones admitted. "We didn't qualify very well, and then, about halfway into the race, I think I lost a couple of cylinders. When we went down a lap, I knew all I could do was ride it out. When my teammate got past Coons for second, I knew that would help us. It was a total team effort. It doesn't matter if you win the championship by one point or 100 points. It's ours and it feels great."

Jones' run to his second straight Silver Crown championship went much smoother than the one he earned in 2010 when, following his season-opening victory in February at USA Raceway in Tucson, Ariz., the team suffered some major setbacks that left it with a handful of poor finishes. In a showcase of resiliency, Jones and Company rallied back to beat Kaeding for the title by just two points.

Front-running consistency is what earned Jones his second Silver Crown title and sixth in USAC this season as the 29-year-old is also a four-time USAC Sprint Car champion (2005, 2007, 2009 and 2010). Jones began his Silver Crown title defense in May with a runner-up finish in the season-opener at the Indiana State Fairgrounds and ended the 2011 campaign with three runner-up finishes in the final four events. For the second consecutive season, he finished seventh in the season finale to claim the title.

"Once you win a championship, your goal for the next year is coming back and winning it again," said Jones, who looks to secure another USAC championship this year as he leads the Sprint Car standings by 44 points with six races remaining. "We learned a lot winning the Silver Crown title last year. I remember in April when Jim Campbell, Terry Dolan and Eleni Mareskas from Chevy came to the shop and talked about how proud they were of the championships we've won. That kind of hit home. I never even dreamed of being able to win a USAC race, let alone a championship. To have multiple championships in both the Sprint Car and Silver Crown series is still pretty hard for me to believe. I'm very proud of this second Silver Crown championship."

With his Silver Crown title in-hand, a third-straight USAC Sprint Car championship would put Jones in rarified air. Not only would he become USAC's first five-time Sprint Car champion, Jones would also own seven USAC National titles, joining Rich Vogler and Mel Kenyon. Only A.J. Foyt has more, with a total of 10.

Clauson concluded his second season in the Silver Crown division with a second-place finish at Toledo. It was his second straight top-five finish and fifth top-10 of the season. Clauson concluded the campaign with 269 points, good for the ninth spot in the final standings. The 2010 USAC National Drivers Championship (NDC) winner leads the standings for this year's with seven races remaining.

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Jones' championship drive capped a season's worth of memorable moments for the Chevrolet/GM Performance Parts/Curb Records teams in the Silver Crown competition.

Jones was the fastest qualifier in the season-opening Hoosier Hundred at the Indiana State Fairgrounds in May. He then led the first 53 laps of the 100-lap race and ultimately finished second. Clauson paced the qualifying field for Ted Horn 100 on Sept. 4 at the DuQuion (Ill.) State Fairgrounds. Clauson would lead the first 22 laps while Jones timed in second and finished the 100-lapper in the runner-up spot.

Jones completed his sixth season driving for two-time NASCAR Sprint Cup Series champion Stewart. Clauson finished his second season with TSR driving in the Silver Crown division.

Stewart, who holds the distinction of being the winningest entrant in USAC's Silver Crown division, had time to place a congratulatory call to Jones prior to the start of Saturday night's Bank of America 500 at Charlotte (N.C.) Motor Speedway.

"It takes a lot to win a championship and even more to repeat," Stewart said. "Everyone at TSR takes a lot of pride in winning championships, and I can't say enough how proud I am of Levi and the entire team for winning another Silver Crown championship. I've said before that I believe the USAC Silver Crown Series is one of the most competitive in all of racing.

"To win another championship with Chevy and Curb and our first with GM Performance Parts makes this even more special. We can't compete at a championship level without these partnerships. Winning this championship is an accomplishment I'm really proud of, and the same is true for everyone associated with TSR."

Levi Jones: Driver of the No. 10 Curb Records/Armor All/Bass Pro Shops USAC Silver Crown Series Car

Date of Birth: June 10, 1982
Hometown: Olney, Ill.
Residence: Swansea, Ill.
Marital Status: Married (Heidi)
Children: Son (Cru)
Race Director: Jimmy Carr
Highlights: Two-time USAC Silver Crown Series champion (2010, 2011) ... Earned first career Silver Crown win at USA Raceway in Tucson, Ariz., in February 2010 ... Earned second Silver Crown victory at Terre Haute (Ind.) Action Track in October 2010 ... Four-time USAC National Sprint Car Series champion (2005, 2007, 2009, 2010) ... Won a series-high eight USAC Sprint Series races in 2010 ... Won the 2008 and 2009 USAC Indiana Sprint Week Series championships ... Won the 2007 USAC National Sprint Car Series championship ... Earned runner-up honors in the 2006 USAC Sprint Series championship ... Won first USAC Sprint Series title in 2005 ... Earned a series-high five USAC Sprint Series victories in 2005 ... Named the inaugural O'Reilly Sprint Bandits champion in 2005 after sweeping four of five events en route to the title ... Voted 2005 and 2009 Driver of the Year by the North American Non-Winged Sprint Car Panel ... Won the 2004 USAC Indiana Sprint Week Series Championship ... Earned national attention by winning the inaugural USAC Sprint Car Series event at The Dirt Track @ Charlotte (N.C.) Motor Speedway in 2004 ... Finished third in the USAC Sprint Series championship in 2003 ... Was named USAC Sprint Car Series Most Improved Driver in 2001 ... Began racing 410 Sprint Cars in 1998 at age 16.

About Chevrolet

Founded in Detroit in 1911, Chevrolet celebrates its centennial as a global automotive brand with annual sales of about 3.5 million vehicles in more than 130 countries. In the U.S., the Chevrolet portfolio includes: iconic performance cars such as Corvette and Camaro; dependable, long-lasting pickups and SUVs, such as Silverado and Suburban; and award-winning passenger cars and crossovers, such as Malibu, Equinox and Traverse. Chevrolet also offers "gas-friendly" solutions, such as Chevrolet Cruze Eco with an EPA-estimated 42 miles per gallon highway, and the Chevrolet Volt offering 35 miles of electric driving and an additional 344 miles of extended gasoline range, according to EPA estimates. Most new Chevrolet models offer OnStar safety, security and convenience technologies including OnStar Hands-Free Calling, Automatic Crash Response and Stolen Vehicle Slowdown. More information regarding Chevrolet models, fuel solutions and OnStar availability can be found at www.chevrolet.com.

About GM Performance Parts

GM Performance Parts (GMPP) fuels the passions of automotive enthusiasts with factory-engineered and fully assembled crate engines, engine parts and vehicle accessories, including specialized licensed parts and accessories. GM Performance Parts is the only source for brand-new classic small-block and big-block crate engines, which use all-new parts, including the cylinder block, rotating assembly and cylinder heads. GMPP is also the leader in "LS" performance, with a full range of production-based crate engines and the growing family of LSX maximum performance engines and parts. GMPP's LS-based E-ROD engine systems include emissions equipment that meets California requirements for pre-OBD-II vehicles (E-ROD LS3 systems carry CARB EO D-126-30), delivering high performance with low emissions. No other manufacturer offers a comparable system. Customers can view information and purchase engines and parts at www.gmperformanceparts.com.

About Curb Records

Curb Records is a record label started by Mike Curb, originally as Sidewalk Records in 1963. From 1969 to 1973, Curb merged with MGM Records where Curb served as president of MGM and Verve Records. After MGM Records was sold in 1973, Curb Records continued to operate as one of the most successful independent record labels in the United States. For more information, visit www.curb.com.