

There is no mistaking the pink car or the long blond hair that falls past her shoulders when she takes her helmet off. Lori Langevin is definitely a lady. But beyond her gender comes the fact that Lori Langevin is not just a great *female* racer, she is a great *racer*. Over two dozen wins and four championships weren't handed to her, they were earned.

Lori's association with racing began as a young fan. "My earliest racing memory is sitting in the stands with my Aunt and watching David Patrick race." says Lori. "I was in my early teens. My father helped him on the car and we went every Friday and Sunday. I always cheered for Don Mattison in the modified class. I will never forget when I was 13 or 14 I got to ride in his car when they had Kiddy Ride Night."

Little did Don know the kind of racing bug that would grow inside that young girl. "I started racing when I was 16 years old." Lori remembers. "I drove in a Powder Puff race. I won that race and started driving the next season in the Limited Street Stocks. "I kinda thought that it was not gonna work out good for her, being such a male-dominated sport." says Lori's father Chris. "But after a few races, she picked it right up so I knew it was something that she could do." "I was going to race for one year and see how it worked out" Lori says. "I was the track champion at Devil's Bowl my first year and here I am, still racing. I guess it worked out."

Success has come consistently in Lori's racing life. After the Limited Street Stock Championship came three Pro-Street Championships (Albany-Saratoga Speedway in 2006 and 2007 and Devil's Bowl in 2007) along with 13 career wins at Albany-Saratoga, 10 at Devil's Bowl and 1 win at Fonda (as of press time).

"My racing career has been awesome to this point." says Lori. "I have had lots of fun. I have received an award from NYSSCA (the New York State Stock Car Association) every year as well as Driver of the Year, Rookie of the Year, and outstanding performance awards. I have always finished in the top 10 in points at every track that I have raced at for points."

Lori's racing has produced not only wins and trophies, but it also produced a husband in the form of Rob Langevin, a Sportsmen racer on the CVRA circuit. "Rob and I met when we were both racing in the Pro-Street class." she says. "We were running against each other. After we started dating it made racing tougher. When I was in the car I was always worried every time the caution would come out because I was not sure if it was him or not. I can watch him race and he can watch

me race and it's not against each other. I feel better watching in the stands. I am nervous when he is on the track, but even more so when we are racing against each other. He races Sportsmen now so it's easier to watch him. He also doesn't get beat by a girl!"

Says Rob, "When Lori and I were racing together my buddies were like, 'Oh, you like Lori. You let her go by' and I'm like 'she just beat me plain and simple.' There were a few side by side battles before we started dating. I came out on top of one at Fonda and once at Albany-Saratoga, but more often than not she beat me."

It is hard to discuss Lori's racing without addressing the obvious question; What effect has Lori's gender had on her career? "Being a female racer can help and hurt you." she says. "Being a girl and doing well in your class can make it hard. Other drivers say that I am favored but I would hope not. I want to be treated just like every other driver, male or female. I get a lot of media coverage because I have had great success in what I do. I want to be treated just like the male drivers. I can drive with them on the track and want to be treated the same off the track. You're not gonna get the respect of all the drivers, being a female, but I think a lot of the guys have no problem racing with me. I try to race everyone clean, so I don't think it makes a difference being a female or not. If you can drive a race car, you can drive a race car."

While Lori's husband Rob maintains his Sportsmen at his auto repair business in Vermont, Lori's car stays in NY when it is not at the racetrack. "My cars are kept in Salem, NY at my Dad's." she says. "They do all the work on the cars. My father lives on a farm and it is a mess but the work gets done. My family maintains my car and they are all at the races each week. They support me in what I do. If it was not for them I would not be here. My sister is beside me each and every week. She is my biggest supporter. My father Chris, and Uncles Todd and Tim, they do all the work and should get the credit. And Mike and Liz Garrity. They are my biggest sponsor and own my cars. They are like family and have sponsored my car for 5 years. I would not be where I am today if not for their financial support."

Lori's racing career is not without its challenges, though. "It's hard knowing that I have to do well" she says. "There are lots of people watching and the pressure makes it hard sometimes. The class is so close in competition that it gets harder and harder each week to come out on top. Avoiding wrecks is a big challenge, especially when I am the target some weeks. Some of the drivers will try to wreck me just because they don't want me to win. There are always negative things said about me at the track. I keep my head held high and do my thing. People say I'm

cheating and I get special treatment. I think it is because they're getting beat by a girl. If anyone has a problem with me they can protest my car. No one ever does. I just ignore what is said. I am nice to everyone, even if I know that they don't like me."

In 2004, Lori got to show off her driving skills in front a NASCAR crowd. "The Drive for Diversity program was a great experience for me" she says. "It gave me a chance to go and meet other female and minority drivers. We took laps in Virginia on an asphalt track. I had never driven on an asphalt track before so it was a challenge for me. I was the only driver there from dirt. Coming from dirt made it hard, but it was a great learning experience for me."

Despite that trip south, Lori doesn't see a NASCAR ride in her future. "I don't have any plans to move out of Pro-Streets" she says. "I love this class and like the people that I race with. This is where I want to be."

So what, then, does the future hold for Lori? "Now that I'm married I'm sure I will not race forever" she says. "Rob and I would love to have a family someday, but with both of us racing those plans are on hold. It'll happen when the time is right."

Lori also feels an obligation to her fans, as well as her husband and future family. "I know I have a lot of fans that are little kids" she says. "It's a great feeling knowing that you have people who look up to you. When I win my car disappears with all my fans around it. This is why I keep going. Those fans are there every week cheering me on. I always say I want to quit when I have a bad finish, but I cannot remember when I have said I was done and was serious about it. There are lots of good things that have happened in my career. The best thing is that I can keep racing and stay competitive."

2008 finds Lori again on top, with wins and top 5 finishes. Week in and week out, she is always a threat to win. "I love going to the track knowing that my car is a top 5 car each week" she says. "Winning 4 track championships and 24+ races in my short career is a great thing. Some people race their whole lifetime and cannot get even 1 win or 1 championship. I am blessed to be doing what I love and being so successful at it."