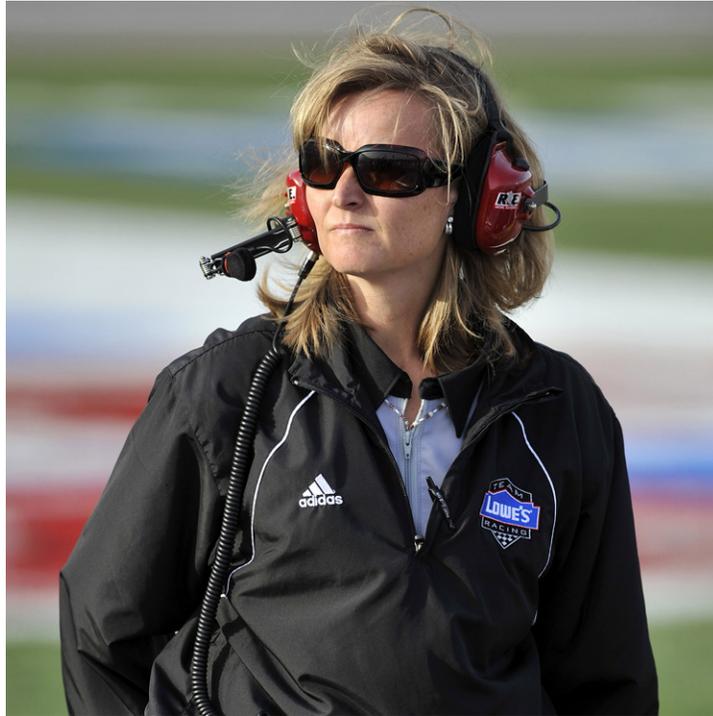




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## Lisa Jones Smokstad

September 6, 1969 – Present

Nationality: American

Involved in racing since 1990

**Origins:** Growing up in Shakopee, Minn., a suburb of the Twin Cities, Lisa spent her afternoons hanging around the Jones family garage trying to impress her father and older brother. Along the way, though, Lisa also developed general knowledge about cars and was given the chance to fine-tune her family's trait of persistence. She knew even at a young age, thanks to her father, she could accomplish any challenge issued if she just worked hard enough. Lisa's work ethic went beyond the garage and into the gym, where she was able to express her "girly-girl" side. At age 6, she began gymnastics and competed in the sport until her teens, when she started coaching.

**Early Influences:** Lisa's desire to impress her father and brother didn't change once she enrolled at the University of Minnesota, when she decided to pick up a weekend job working concessions at Raceway Park in Shakopee. During this time, Lisa met her future husband Craig Smokstad, who was the owner and crew chief of his brother's late model team. One day, the tire specialist failed to show up, and Craig joked that Lisa should fill the position since she spent so much time at the racetrack. Lisa, not one to back down from a challenge, didn't hesitate. She stepped up and earned the permanent position. Lisa jokes that she was chosen because she was one of the only people on the sidelines confident in math and fractions.

**Education:** Lisa earned a bachelor's degree in psychology at the University of Minnesota in 1992 and pursued a career as a courtroom child advocate before turning her hobby of racing into a full-time job. She admits that she always has loved math and took every math course she could fit into her schedule while finishing her psychology degree. Studying numbers and personalities paid off, as Lisa built her education through on-the-job training and quizzing fellow crew members.

**Career Path:** Throughout college and upon graduating in 1992, Lisa devoted her weekends to helping Craig Smokstad's race team as the tire specialist. In 1996, Lisa decided to make racing her full-time job and moved to North Carolina with her husband. There, Lisa went on the road as a tire specialist for Kenny Schrader's American Speed Association (ASA) team, but her position wasn't limited to that particular series. Schrader competed in a variety of series - everything from dirt tracks to trucks-and Lisa continued to build her education as the tire specialist in every case. Hendrick Motorsports offered Lisa a position as a tire specialist in 1999, and she has been with the team ever since. At Hendrick Motorsports, Lisa was a member of Jack Sprague's NASCAR Camping World Truck Series team, which won titles in 1999 and 2001, and Brian Vicker's 2003 champion Nationwide Series team. She also has managed tires for Kyle Busch, Dale Earnhardt Jr., Jeff Gordon, Jimmie Johnson and Casey Mears during their time at Hendrick Motorsports. She currently works with all four Hendrick Motorsports teams testing and filling in on weekends when necessary.

**Major Responsibilities:** Lisa used to spend most of her time on the track, traveling with the Hendrick Motorsports teams and taking charge of race-day tire issues (measuring the temperature, tread thickness and pressure readings throughout the day). In 2010, however, she began a new role at Hendrick Motorsports in which she now focuses on strategizing and tire testing. When in the shop, Lisa is responsible for purchasing each team's tires and monitoring the related statistical information. Each week, Lisa coordinates the data from all of the Hendrick Motorsports cars and meets with the other tire specialists to discuss patterns or trends that will help the teams earn even more wins. She also debriefs with the Hendrick Motorsports crew chiefs, reporting the race stats she collected and suggesting what tire changes each crew chief should use on whatever track they are visiting.

**Advice to Others:** Lisa says the best piece of advice for anyone, not just those interested in technology careers, is to make sure you're the best at what you do. This motto applies to everything in life, and it is especially important when entering a competitive field like motor sports. Ask questions, do your homework and understand how your field fits into the rest of the puzzle, she says. Once you broaden your knowledge of a specific field, you automatically become better in your chosen specialization and can contribute in different ways. For example, Lisa's love of math led her to try her first tire specialist position. She never has stopped learning and today oversees Hendrick Motorsports' tire testing initiatives.

**Life off the Track:** Lisa and Craig, who married in 1993, welcomed daughter RaElla in 2007 and are enjoying watching her grow up. Most of Lisa's time is spent with her family, sharing in RaElla's daily discoveries and new experiences. Rather than coach gymnastics - a role Lisa held until 2008 - she now prefers to support her daughter in the sport, reminding young RaElla every now and again to point her toes during her weekly lessons.

**Interesting Fact:** While Lisa has been involved in a championship team on every level of NASCAR, something that most might not know about her is that she actually flew the Goodyear Blimp. It was 2003, and she challenged the general manager of Worldwide Racing at Goodyear, that if Brian Vickers won the Nationwide championship that year, she would get a chance to ride in the iconic blimp. Vickers was fourth in the championship standings at the time, so he accepted the challenge. Months later, Vickers was crowned the champion, and Lisa reminded the general manager at the championship party about their little bet. Within three years, her dream came true. Lisa rode in the blimp around the Charlotte area and even piloted the vessel for a while.

**Awards and Achievements:**

- 2009 NASCAR Sprint Cup Series "Consistently Smooth" Tire Specialist Award Recipient with teammate Zach Miller
- Featured expert in the National Science Foundation's 2010 online video series "The Science of Speed."