



### Larry Jones

**Born:** September 2, 1956 in Hopkinsville, Ky.

**Larry Jones' record at Keeneland:**

**Total Wins: 22**

**Stakes Wins: (1)**

- Won the 2007 King's Bishop (G1) with Hard Spun.
- Finished second in two Breeders' Cup races in 2007—the Classic (G1) with Hard Spun and the Juvenile Fillies (G1) with Proud Spell.
- Won the 2006 Prioress Breeders' Cup Stakes (G1) with Wildcat Bettie B.
- Won the \$1 million Delaware Handicap (G2) in 2005 with Island Sand.
- Won first Grade 1 race with Island Sand in the 2004 Acorn (G1).
- Won first Keeneland stakes with Josh's Madelyn in the 2004 Lexus Raven Run (G2).

For Kentuckian (James) Larry Jones, 2007 was his best year as a trainer. He had two Eclipse Award finalists in his shedrow—Hard Spun and Proud Spell—and his stable won 77 races and earned a career-best \$5,931,956 to rank 15th. The ever-game Hard Spun won four graded races, including the King's Bishop, and his stakes-placings included seconds in the Kentucky Derby (G1) and Breeders' Cup Classic and thirds included the Preakness (G1). Proud Spell won the White Clay Creek Stakes, followed by the Matron Stakes (G2) and then a runner-up effort in the Breeders' Cup Juvenile Fillies.

"I never dreamed we would have the year we had in 2007," said Jones. "That \$5.9 million in purses in a year is something I'd always considered beyond me."

He also won added-money races last year with Wildcat Bettie B, New Edition, Gasia, Sweetdownthelane and Royal Diana.

"Our horses are getting better," he observed early in 2007. "We don't have many claiming horses now. We've been able to upgrade. We won't be going back to Prairie Meadows with a string this year. We're kind of outgrowing it."

In early 2006, Jones had said: "We have some pretty nice 3-year-old fillies this year." One of them was Wildcat Bettie B. "We're pretty excited about what we have coming. We have made a great deal of progress."

As it turned out, Jones had good reason to be excited. His stable won 62 races during 2006 and earned \$2,823,294. Wildcat Bettie B, whose Prioress win gave Jones his second Grade 1 victory, also won two other graded races and the Dixie Belle Stakes. He won a total of 14 stakes that also included Hello Liberty's win in the Nassau County Breeders' Cup (G2) at Belmont.

The richest victory of his training career came in the 2005 Delaware Handicap when Island Sand took home the \$600,000 winner's share of the \$1-million guaranteed purse. In winning by three and three-quarter lengths, she became a millionaire herself.

"It was just wonderful," Jones said afterward. "When we came by the finish line the first time, we were still about eight-wide and I

was really wondering how we were going to save any ground. But Jerry (Bailey) got her inside about three-wide. How he saved as much ground as he did, I will never know. That made the difference."

Jones had won his first Grade 1 race in 2004 with Island Sand in the Acorn. Not long after that, he nearly lost her after routine surgery for an entrapped epiglottis. He estimated it was a "one in a million shot" that she'd be as good at 4 as she had been at 3.

Island Sand's breeder, Dick Maynard, brought owner Jim Osborne and Jones together. Maynard and Osborne are friends in Arkansas, and Maynard had suggested that Osborne consider letting Jones be his trainer. Maynard bought Island Sand privately and called Jones.

"He told me he had purchased a filly and was sending her to me," Jones told *The Blood-Horse*, "but her current trainer (Tony Dutrow) said if he left her in New York she would win the Busanda." Jones advised Maynard to leave her in New York. After she won the Busanda, her first stakes victory, she was vanned to Oaklawn Park.

In her initial start for Jones, she ran second in the Fantasy Stakes (G2) and then second to Ashado in the Kentucky Oaks (G1).

In her next start she won the Acorn.

A tornado that caused nine barns at Ellis Park to collapse in November 2005 forced him to leave his training base early for Oaklawn's 2006 meet. He said then that it was up in the air whether his operation would be based at Ellis again.

Though Island Sand was retired in 2005 and bred to A.P. Indy, Jones had 40 horses with him at Oaklawn to keep him busy. Afterward, he headed to Keeneland and then on to Delaware Park for the first time instead of Ellis Park.

Jones gallops many of his own horses, an average of nine or 10 each day, he said. His wife, Cindy, who is his assistant, formerly galloped for him.

Other stakes winners in 2005 were Swede, Wild Wild West and Sunriseontheoasis. His stable won 62 races and earned \$2,235,341.

His first Keeneland stakes winner was Josh's Madelyn, who won the 2004 Raven Run. After stumbling at the start, she rallied eight wide for the victory. She had previously won the Panther Stakes at Prairie Meadows.

For the year, Jones won 35 races and his horses earned \$1,167,990.

Jones has been successful selecting modest-priced horses at Keeneland sales. Josh's Madelyn was purchased for \$10,000 and earned more than \$400,000. Another was 2003 Fantasy Stakes (G2) winner Ruby's Reception, a \$12,000 purchase who earned more than \$365,000. Yet another was multiple stakes winner Don't Countess Out, a \$16,000 acquisition who went on to earn \$378,951.

"Hopefully, it all wasn't due to luck," he told Robert Yates of the *Arkansas Democrat Gazette* of his selections. "We'd like to think it wasn't. Our percentage of doing it is pretty good."

Jones, who carries a stethoscope around with him at the sales, has been asked what he's listening for numerous times. "I put it up there and see if that horse says 'buy me.' If it says 'buy me, buy me,' I say, 'all right.'"

"I don't think there's any question I have a better chance of winning the Kentucky Oaks than the Kentucky Derby," he said. "When we're sent to the sales, that's not what I've been sent to try and find, a Derby horse."

Before he turned to training, Jones was a commercial farmer in Hopkinsville who grew corn, tobacco and soybeans and raised cattle and hogs. "It was just something I always wanted to do," he explained. "I was farming at the time and farming was not going well in the '70s, so I sold out and started doing this. I grew up showing horses so it was a natural move over."

He first dabbled in the Thoroughbred industry in 1980 as the owner of a \$2,500 claimer named Ala Turf, who was a winner. "I had a perfect record as an owner," he said. Two years later, he took out a trainer's license and saddled his first winner at Ellis Park in 1982. "I thought things weren't getting trained right, so I might as well do it myself. I found out training horses was a whole lot more fun than farming."

His first stakes victory came on Aug. 16, 1986, at Ellis Park when Capt. Bold won the Honorable Order of Ky. Colonel Stakes. Since then, he has developed such other stakes winners as Greatcaesar'sghost, D. C. Tenacious, Poverty Slew, Endless Parade, Strodes Commander and Elusive Sara.

Jones, who always wears a cowboy hat, describes it as "my signature. My father and grandfather farmed and ranched. I loved doing anything that involved horses. The hat became part of the job. I got into matching horses at an early age, then progressed to racing. I had no idea racing would take me this far. I'm grateful."

Through Jan. 9, 2007, he had 469 victories, earnings of \$10,708,173 and 21 stakes winners, according to Equineline.com