

North American Touring Car Championship 1996 Series Guide

M I D - S E A S O N R E V I E W



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Randy's Show



Randy Pobst scores a pair of victories in Portland

Randy Pobst chalked up more than just a couple of wins when he drove the T.C. Kline Racing, Neuspeed Honda to victories in Rounds 5 and 6 of the North American Touring Car Championship at Portland International Raceway in Oregon.

The double win was the first for a driver and manufacturer in the NATCC's inaugural season, and it was the first win for a Honda Super Touring car outside of Japan. Just as significantly, the victories also vaulted Pobst into the lead in the Drivers' Championship, with 108 points to Dominic Dobson's 100 and David Donohue's 99. They also put Honda in the hunt for the Manufacturers' Championship with a scant three points separating Honda from first-place Dodge.

Pobst started on the pole for race number one of the first event with back-to-back races on North America's Super Touring calendar. He grabbed the grid position in Friday's

qualifying, but then saw it jeopardized by a crash on the third lap of qualifying for race two on Saturday morning. The T.C. Kline Racing crew is getting plenty of practice in chassis and body repair since Pobst's exuberant racing style has tested them a number of times in the previous

the effort worth their while with a great start and a lead that was never challenged after the first lap.

At the finish Pobst was 7 seconds ahead of the Dodge Stratus of PacWest's David Donohue, and the winner was quick to thank his crew for enabling him to race. "I owed it to the guys . . .," Pobst said. "They worked hard for me. The Honda has great speed, and I'm getting used to the handling. There is still more in the car, and we are going to find it."



Randy Pobst (far left) picked up a pair of North American Touring Car Championship wins at the 1.95-mile Portland International Raceway.

events. With some quick, creative work, the team was able to put the Honda on the grid for a driver who is rapidly becoming known as the NATCC's Mr. Excitement. He made

The dogfight for third, fourth and fifth was a fan pleaser with points leader Dobson in his Dodge, Forrest Granlund in the H.A.R.T. Honda Accord and Peter Hardman in the

North American Touring Car Championship

Rounds 5 & 6 • Portland, Ore. • June 22, 1996 • Portland International Raceway • (1.95-mile permanent road course), 19 laps (37.05 miles)

ROUND 5

Fin.	St.	Driver	Car	Time/Status	Fast Lap
1	1	Randy Pobst	Honda Accord	25:54.612	1:21.055
2	2	David Donohue	Dodge Stratus	26:01.828	1:21.504
3	3	Forrest Granlund	Honda Accord	26:07.865	1:21.171
4	4	Dominic Dobson	Dodge Stratus	26:11.077	1:21.658
5	5	Peter Hardman	Honda Accord	26:11.663	1:21.273
6	5	Jeff Andretti	Ford Mondeo	26:29.651	1:22.283
7	7	Victor Gonzalez Jr.	Ford Mondeo	26:31.197	1:22.006
8	6	Steve Petty	BMW	26:47.449	1:23.236

ROUND 6

Fin.	St.	Driver	Car	Time/Status	Fast Lap
1	3	Randy Pobst	Honda Accord	25:43.133	1:20.227
2	2	Peter Hardman	Honda Accord	25:47.509	1:20.569
3	4	Forrest Granlund	Honda Accord	25:48.248	1:20.480
4	5	David Donohue	Dodge Stratus	25:58.678	1:21.109
5	1	Dominic Dobson	Dodge Stratus	26:07.006	1:21.426
6	8	Jeff Andretti	Ford Mondeo	26:13.257	1:21.094
DNF	6	Victor Gonzalez Jr.	Ford Mondeo	12 laps	1:21.437
DNF	7	Steve Petty	BMW	10 laps	1:22.643

Note: All cars running on Michelin Pilot tires.

second T.C. Kline Racing Honda dicing for the final podium spot. The three ran nose to tail lap after lap with Dobson leading. Hardman made numerous attempts at passing Dobson but was rebuffed repeatedly, as was Granlund in his attempts to get by Hardman. On lap 15, Hardman momentarily got by Dobson on the outside going into the Festival Curves, but he was carrying too much speed and went off briefly, allowing the Stratus driver to retake the position. Granlund took advantage and moved past Hardman as well. On the next lap Granlund was able to take Dobson for third, and he held the position to the end.

Fifteen minutes after the checkered flag, race two took the green.

Dobson started from the pole position in his Dodge Stratus with Hardman in second, but Pobst was still hooked up after the first race and got a tremendous start from his spot on the second row. He passed Dobson before the end of the first lap and was followed by Hardman and Granlund for a Honda parade at the front. Dobson, now in fourth was being shadowed by Jeff Andretti in the Leitzinger Racing Ford, and on lap four, Andretti timed his move perfectly to get by. On lap seven, however, he pushed a bit too hard in the improving Ford and had a brief off-track excursion, which was all Dobson and Donohue needed to get past. Donohue then got around his teammate to take fourth.

The race for second and third between Hardman and Granlund proved to be close and entertaining. The quick Hondas were closely matched, and Hardman had to watch his mirrors as Granlund made several attempted passes. Hardman was able to defend his position, however, and at the checkered flag it was Pobst, Hardman, and Granlund in a Honda one-two-three - another first for the NATCC this year.

So after the first six races in this inaugural season of North American Super Touring, the Dodges have won three races, the Hondas have taken two and BMW has one as well. With the points race standings very close in all categories, the championships remain up for grabs.

1996 Super Touring Championship Points

Name	Car	LIME ROCK		DETROIT		PORTLAND		Total
		Race 1	Race 2	Race 1	Race 2	Race 1	Race 2	
Randy Pobst	Honda	18	15	12	18	23	22	108
Dominic Dobson	Dodge	16	23	13	22	13	13	100
David Donohue	Dodge	22	17	17	13	17	13	99
Peter Hardman	Honda	-	10	15	15	12	17	69
Forrest Granlund	Honda	13	13	-	-	15	15	56
Jeff Andretti	Ford	-	-	12	11	11	11	45
Rod Millen	Toyota	1	12	1	12	-	-	26
Victor Gonzales, Jr.	Ford	-	-	-	-	10	10	20

Independents' Challenge

Steve Petty	BMW	12	11	-	-	9	9	41
Ed Delong	BMW	10	8	10	10	-	-	38
Darren Law	BMW	-	9	22	1	-	-	32
Martin Stretton	Mercedes	11	-	-	-	-	-	11

Michelin Cup / The Manufacturers' Championship

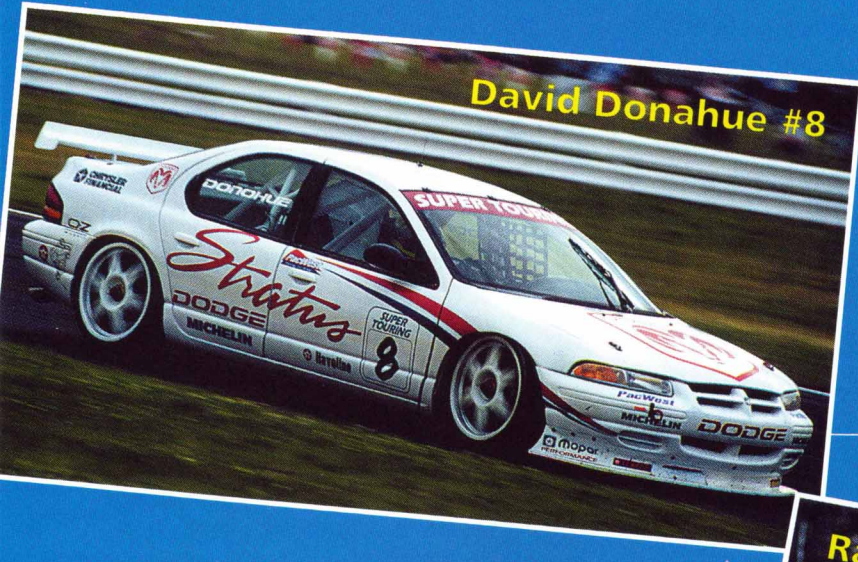
Dodge	20	20	17	20	17	13	107
Honda	17	15	15	17	20	20	104
Ford	-	-	12	11	11	11	45
Toyota	9	12	9	12	-	-	42



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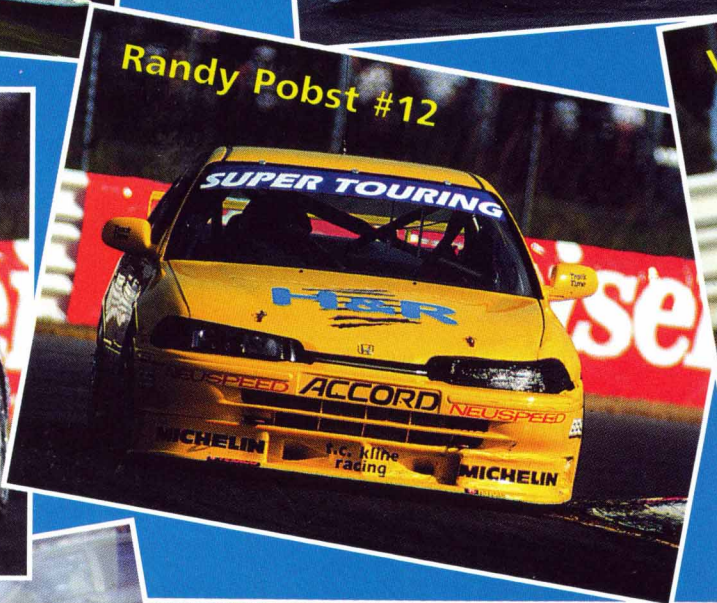
David Donahue #8



Jeff Andretti #5



Randy Pobst #12



Peter Hardman #21



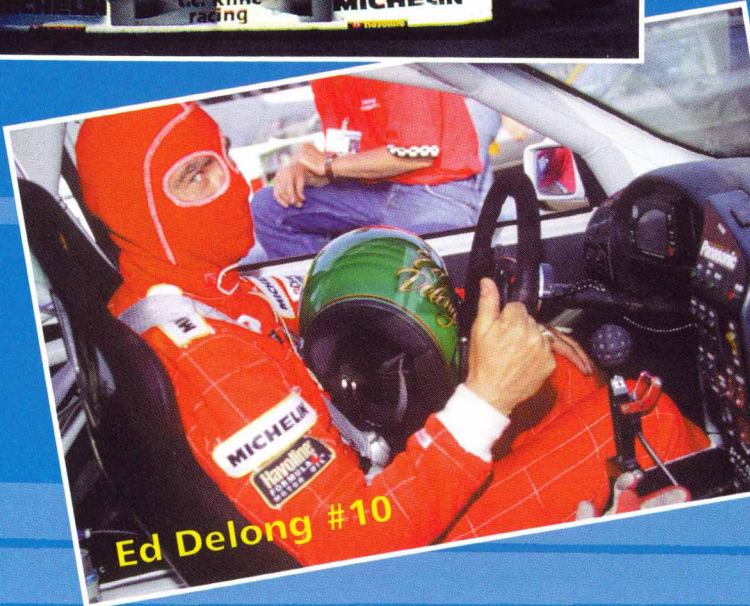
Victor G



Steve Petty #3



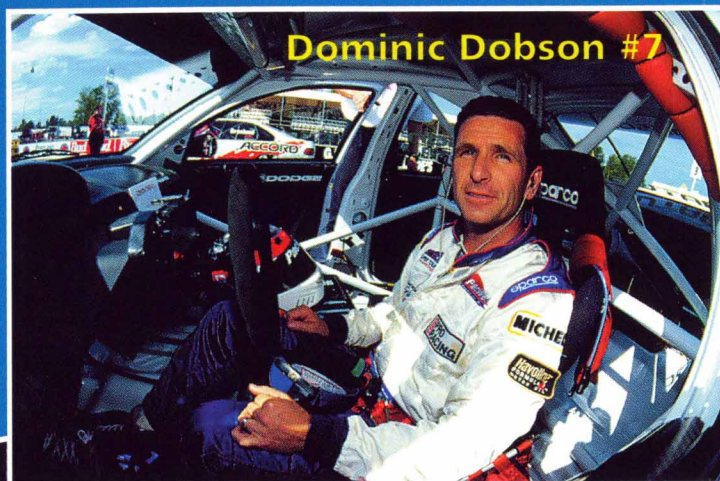
Ed Delong #10



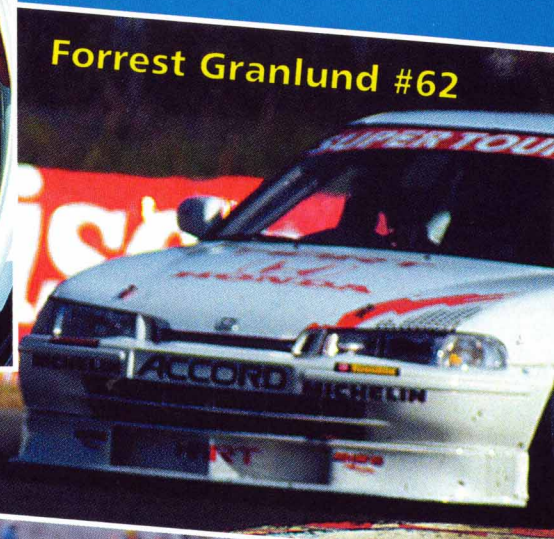
Stars of the ing Car Championship



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Dominic Dobson #7



Forrest Granlund #62

onzales, Jr. #27



Darren Law #18

Rod Millen #2



Martin Stretton #6