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SCCA Pro Racing SPEED Touring Car And GT Championship At Road America

Source: Team Race Reports



RealTime Racing Report

RealTime Racing Acura driver Pierre Kleinubing drove his TSX to a hard-fought second place finish at Road America, Round Eight of the SCCA Pro Racing SPEED Touring Car Championship. This result netted an additional three markers over second place Mazda in the Manufacturers' Championship, with Acura now leading by 18 points, 69-51. If Acura can score at least one fourth place result in either of the final two races, it will secure its record-extending sixth Manufacturers' title.

Kleinubing qualified on the pole with a 98.376 mph lap around the famed 4.048-mile road course and led laps 1 thru 11 before being passed by BMW driver James Clay, who was only able to put a 1.5-second gap on Kleinubing when the checkered flag fell six laps later.

"This was the most exciting Touring Car race the series has seen in quite awhile," commented RTR team leader Peter Cunningham, whose fifth place finish keeps him in second place for the driving title. "The battles were ongoing throughout the field and no one knew where they would finish until the checkered flag fell."

Points leader Kuno Wittmer came into the weekend as the series' most recent race winner, but found out that was no guarantee of superiority. In Qualifying he led the pack out of the gate as the Touring Cars line up in points order. At a place like Road America however, that's not where you want to be, because being the benefactor of the 'draft' can shave your lap time substantially. After starting from the 11th position (This was the first time this year he qualified worse than sixth), Wittmer did his best to work his way to the front but got shuffled back in a restart fracas and had to settle for 10th.

Former RealTime regular Eric Curran pinch hit once again this weekend, for an absent Glenn Bocchino. Glenn instead focused his energies on his i-Moto Racing Grand Am Koni Challenge program that was competing in Iowa. Eric was quickly comfortable in the similar RSX machine that he had driven for three years for the RealTime squad, gridding the car in 10th. In that previously-mentioned skirmish on the restart, he chose the proper lane, allowing him to produce a sixth place finish.

Dino Crescentini was looking to improve on his 14th place starting point, but fell to 18th after an electrical gremlin under the hood forced his retirement before the 17 laps were completed.

So now, with eight of the ten rounds complete, an incredible battle is shaping up the Drivers' Championship, as three RealTime Acura drivers are in lockstep for the points lead. Wittmer maintains the top of the order with 765 markers, Cunningham runs second with 762, and Kleinubing's results here in Wisconsin moved him right back into the fray with 760. At no time in the 19-year history of the World Challenge has the fight for the title been so close this late in the season.

"This weekend was also special because we consider Road America our home track. We enjoyed spending time with more than 200 family members and friends of RealTime Racing," added Cunningham. "The weather was picture-perfect, and the support from our fans helped us perform at our best."

The SPEED TV broadcast of the Road America race airs Wednesday, August 20 at 1pm ET.

K-PAX/3R Race Report

Pobst and Galati finish their K-PAX/3R Porsches in 3rd and 15th at Road America

The K-PAX/3R Porsches of Randy Pobst and Michael Galati survived what was a most interesting SPEED World Challenge GT race here on the worlds famous 4 miles of Wisconsin asphalt known as Road America in Elkhart Lake Wisconsin.

Round 6 of the SCCA Pro Racing SPEED World Challenge GT Championships at Road America will be long remembered by Randy Pobst as a race that went from the predictable to surprising and quickly migrated to the bizarre as not only did Pobst leave Wisconsin with his Championship lead in tact he actually extended it!

Randy Pobst, of Gainesville Georgia, qualified his #1 K-PAX/3R Racing Porsche 911 GT3 in 8th and for the first 12 laps Randy was languishing in 7th position unable to close up on the leading Vipers, Cadillacs, Corvettes and Mustangs as pole sitter and eventual race winner Tommy Archer had the field covered.

When the course went caution on lap 13 to pick the Pontiac GTO of Joey Scarallo out of a gravel trap the race started to take a strange but very desirable change for Randy Pobst, Michael Galati (who at the time was in 9th trying to find a way past the Viper of Rob Foster) and their K-PAX/3R Racing Porsches.

"The first restart was pretty normal but on the second restart I think Tommy made it a really slow one," said Pobst. "I almost hit McCann when someone said 'green' and I went hard right around McCann in the Cadillac. Brandon Davis saw me coming and he pulled right so I went back left right

between them and there was Galati who had gotten a better start than I did and I almost hit him and ran him in the grass. I just booked it down to the first corner.

“Actually Galati acted like a buffer for me to hold McCann and Davis and everybody else back a little bit because those cars were definitely faster than us so we needed a bit of a traffic jam to keep them behind us.”

“On the first restart I almost stopped and the guys behind me almost got me so on the second restart I made sure I gapped myself and gave myself one car-length more,” said Galati of the restart. “They told me it went green so I just nailed it and went to the right, to the left and to the middle and I went by four guys and then I was alongside Randy so I let him have the corner and thought ‘at least this is better than we had hoped for the weekend’ because I was really surprised to be in 6th position.”

Pobst and Galati had caught much of the field napping and Randy moved from 7th 5th while Michael moved up to 6th!

As fortunate as their sudden and swift elevation in the running order Pobst at least would have this race unfold even better as on that restart lap Brandon Davis who began the race 3rd in the points chance got tagged by Foster and spun into the wall. Davis limped to the pits where he would retire his potent Mustang to a 23rd place finish.

A lap and a half later Andy Pilgrim, who had been running a strong second to Archer all day, found that the contents of his oiling system was being dumped and set afire coming down the straight into turn 5.

The guy who began the race only seven points behind Pobst and looked certain to take the points lead had left the race in a fiery crash.

The really good news for Pobst was that the third place Viper of Jason Daskalos also spun in Pilgrim’s oil slick moving a very surprised but happy Pobst up to a third place finish as the field finished the race behind the safety car.

“The really crazy change in the race was when Pilgrim blew his motor going into turn five,” said Pobst. “I was running about fifth and what saved me I think was that I like to run straight over the hill towards five and I was just a little further back in the line. It allowed me the time to see what was going on and to hold it to the inside and stay on the track.”

“For us this was a really big step towards the championship and job one to winning championships is being there in the end and that was what we did today.”

The oil slick while good news for Pobst was bad news for Michael Galati as he was one of the several cars which spun in the oil dropping Michael’s #23 Porsche back to a disappointing 15th place finish.

“The K-PAX/3R Racing guys gave me a good car today and for awhile I thought that I was going to steal a good finish but I got caught up in the oil going into turn 5 under braking and before I knew it I was going backwards at 120 miles-per-hour,” said Galati. “I just let go of the wheel and pulled my feet back but fortunately I didn’t hit anything.”

It was a good race it is too bad it ended the way it did for me, but it was good for Randy and Porsche.

Pobst’s fortunate 3rd place finish coupled with Andy Pilgrim and Brandon Davis finishing in the 22nd and 23rd positions allowed Pobst to extend his lead in the Drivers’ Championship to 68 over Pilgrim (595 to 527) and 111 over Davis (595 to 484). Michael Galati remains in 4th in the championship with 449 just one point ahead of Archer who has won the last two races.

The K-PAX Porsches also kept Porsche in the lead for the Manufacturers’ Championship Presented by Racer Magazine as Porsche has 36, Dodge 33, Cadillac 30 and Ford 28.

Randy Pobst Race Report

It was a lucky day for Randy as he finished an exciting third place in the Road America SPEED GT Presented by Remington at Elkhart Lake, Wis. Randy and his #1 K-PAX/3R Racing Porsche 911 GT3 qualified in eighth place on Saturday and were hoping for a solid points finish.

"We got a great break today. Road America and the current rules don't suit our Porsche right now. We have a great car and it's amazing how fast it will go with just a 6-cylinder engine. We have, by far, the smallest engine in class, with others twice as large as us, and 100 lbs of "rewards" weight to slow us down and we are still competitive. The level of preparation with K-PAX is so high and a real strength."

"We were running in seventh, solid and steady, when a yellow came out. On the restart, I got a great jump and had a wild moment, slaloming competitors up the front straight. I was able to gain two positions to fifth. Near the end of the race, my closest competitor in points, Andy Pilgrim, blew his engine braking for turn five and turned into a ball of flames, dumping oil all over the track. Several cars behind him hit the oil and slid off track. All of a sudden we were up to third place, right on the tail of the Corvette. The large amount of oil on track ended the race under yellow. Thankfully everyone was okay. Surviving is so important in racing. We got an amazing gift from the racing gods today."

"I would like to send a special thank you to Emma Swanson for my latest new helmet design. I would also like to thank my personal sponsors Team Janica Racing, Prairie Hills Motorsport Club, ChaseCam, and saferacer.com for their continued support."

Due to Andy Pilgrim's engine failure and Brandon Davis' crash, Randy not only maintains his lead but extends it, 68 points over Pilgrim. Porsche also maintains the Manufacturers' Championship lead. Randy and the K-PAX will continue to work hard and not get too overconfident. With four races anything can happen. The SCCA SPEED GT race will air Wednesday, Aug. 20 at noon (ET) on SPEED. Randy's next race will be at Trois-Rivieres, Quebec on August 16 with the KONI Challenge. The next World Challenge GT race will be at Mosport International Raceway on August 23.

SCCA GT Race Report

Tommy Archer, of Duluth, Minn., took his second-straight SCCA Pro Racing SPEED World Challenge GT win, his third of the season, at the Road America SPEED GT Presented by Remington Sunday. Eric Curran, of East Hampton, Mass., and Randy Pobst, of Gainesville, Ga., completed the top three.

Archer did not even expect to be behind the wheel of the No. 13 Foametix/Woodhouse Performance Dodge Viper this weekend, but when team owner Bob Woodhouse called last week to tell him the regularly-scheduled driver, Claudio Burtin, would not be available, Archer obliged to drive the car that carried him to wins at Miller Motorsports Park and Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course.

Archer started from the pole and got out to an early lead over Andy Pilgrim's No. 8 Remington Shaving and Grooming Cadillac CTS-V, who started third. Second-starting Jason Daskalos' No. 5 Daskalos Development & Investments Dodge Viper settled into third, ahead of Curran's No. 30 Whelen Motorsports Chevrolet Corvette.

The four ran that way for the majority of the race, until Pilgrim's motor expired in a fiery way entering Turn Five on lap 16. The entire field behind Archer tip-toed through the oil left from the motor, and several cars, including Daskalos and sixth-place Michael Galati's Porsche, spun. Curran moved from fourth to second, and Pobst from fifth to third in the No. 1 K-PAX Porsche 911 GT-3.

Pilgrim's exit brought out the final, race-ending caution. Officially, the 50-minute time limit expired to end the 18-lap, 72.864-mile race.

"I looked in my mirror and saw this ball of flame," Archer said. "I didn't know who it was at first. I saw Jason [Daskalos'] car go through my mirror. I looked back and said 'not so good.'

"Trying to get a good start was my first thing, because I knew the Cadillac would be strong. We changed the car this morning. We tried to get it to go through a couple of the fast turns better and that worked great. It hurt me a little bit in the slow turns though. Andy [Pilgrim] could gather me up in a couple of slow turns, but I had him covered in the Carousel."

Archer was happy to score another win for the Woodhouse Performance team, but admitted that his future for the remainder of the season is somewhat uncertain.

"I know I'm going to Mosport, but I think that's the last one I'm supposed to do on my schedule," he said. "Until last Friday night, I didn't know I was going to be here. I think it's great that I can help out when I can. The great thing for me is that Bob Woodhouse has tried so hard for so long to have a good team. It feels good to help him get there and show him that you can get to the next level with a little bit of work."

Curran was relieved to return to the podium in the car that carried him to four wins in 2007, but has only been able to make the finish in one of the first five races.

"I feel bad for these Whelen Motorsports guys," Curran said of his season thus far. "We've been working so hard and had an unbelievably up-and-down season last year. We worked really hard all winter to build a good car and did everything we thought we could do right. We started the year and it all went downhill from Sebring. We finished fourth at Watkins Glen, which wasn't so bad. Here we are doing everything we can do to get this car reliable so we can finish and be competitive and we had a good car today.

"I didn't quite have the car for Daskalos. I tried a number of times and I'm sure the video will show I used up all the road trying to get runs on him. I feel bad for Andy [Pilgrim] blowing up a motor, but it's nice to be second. We were all tucked in pretty closed and then Andy blew up. There were flames and all sorts of things going on. Daskalos was right in his tracks and I was a little ways behind Daskalos. He came in flying sideways and I did too, but luckily I moved a little bit to the right and got up on the curbing where there wasn't any oil. I got the car slowed down enough, took a real wide line and used a lot of the road. I think that getting off line and off the oil was the key to getting back on track."

Despite feeling that the Porsche's fought an up-hill battle all weekend at the fast Road America circuit, point leader Pobst not only found his way on to the podium after starting eighth, but extended his point lead after his main competitors, Pilgrim and Brandon Davis, fell out of the race.

"K-PAX/3R is such a good team," Pobst said. "They build a car that stays together. I was running hard, but just couldn't hang onto the big cars.

"The crazy change in the race was when Pilgrim blew his motor going into Turn Five. I think I was running about fifth and what saved us, is that I like to run straight over the hill going into Five and not hold right on the line. When Pilgrim blew up, the cars that were behind him were in his oil. It allowed me to see what was going on, keep it to the inside and stay on the track going through there. I almost hit Eric [Curran] going through there, but not quite. It was pretty cool."

Davis was running in the top six most of the day in his No. 10 ACS/Sun Microsystems Ford Mustang Cobra, but on the race's final restart, fell back and eventually wound up in the Turn Eight tires after contact with Rob Foster's Viper. His car was too damaged to continue.

James Sofronas, of Newport Beach, Calif., started 15th but worked his way up to finish fourth in the No. 14 Global Motorsports Group Porsche 911 GT3. Brian Kubinski, of Shorewood, Ill., started fourth in his No. 12 Diamond Construction/CRP Chevrolet Corvette, but fell to as low as 15th before recovering to a fifth-place finish.

Michael McCann (Cadillac CTS-V), Foster, Jeff Courtney (Dodge Viper), Cindi Lux (Dodge Viper) and Stu Frederick (Dodge Viper) completed the top 10.

Courtney started 26th in his No. 99 KENDA/JTM/MPI Coin/Badger Dodge Viper after a mechanical failure in qualifying. He passed seven cars on the opening lap to capture the Racing Electronics Holeshot Award and 18 positions in the race to earn the Sunoco Hard Charger Award.

Pobst extended his point lead over Pilgrim to 68 (595 to 527). Davis remained third, with 484, followed by Galati (449) and Archer (448). Porsche maintained the Manufacturers' Championship Presented by RACER lead 36 to 33 over Dodge, followed by Cadillac (30), Ford (28) and Chevrolet (11).

Sunday's Road America SPEED GT Presented by Remington will be broadcast Wednesday, Aug. 20 at noon (EDT) on SPEED Channel. The series next travels to Mosport International Raceway for a race Saturday, Aug. 23.



Credit: Mark Weber Image

SCCA Touring Car Race Report

Road America might have owed James Clay one. After twice being upside down in the turn one gravel in 2004 and missing the race altogether in 2006 after a practice crash, Clay got his redemption Sunday, scoring his first SCCA Pro Racing SPEED World Challenge Touring Car win in a thrilling Round Eight at Road America, part of the Road Race Showcase weekend. Polesitter Pierre Kleinubing, of Coconut Creek, Fla., and Jason Saini, of Fort Worth, Texas, completed the top three.

Starting fourth in his No. 36 BimmerWorld BMW 325i, Clay fell to sixth early, but worked back up to fifth by the time a lap six full-course caution came out to extract Michael Galati's Mazda from the Turn One gravel. On the subsequent lap seven restart, he moved to third and then to second one lap later. Clay passed Kleinubing's No. 43 Acura/RealTime/Red Line/Eibach Acura TSX in Turn Five on lap 12, and was able to hold on for his first series victory.

Clay beat Kleinubing to the flag by 1.525 seconds, averaging 93.577 mph over the course of the 17-lap, 68.815-mile race.

"I think this will sink in at some point," Clay said about his first win. "Racing with Pierre [Kleinubing] is always fun and interesting. The first time I got in front of him was maybe five years ago and he pecked at my bumper, pecked at my bumper and it bothered me. After that race, I realized, 'this is not that big of a deal' and I got over it.

"I was able to go by, stretch out the lead and keep it."

Kleinubing and third-starting Chip Herr's No. 97 Mazdaspeed/Tindol Motorsports MAZDA6 looked to have the measure of the field early, as the pair put a two-second gap on the battle for third. On the restart, however, Jim Daniels got a run on the two in his No. 75 Mazdaspeed/Stoptech/Racinghart MAZDA6 as the pack headed into Turn One.

Daniels bumped Kleinubing's rear bumper under breaking, tossing the Acura into a drift, which the four-time series Champion somehow saved. With the Acura sideways in the track, the remainder of the frontrunners checked up, allowing Kleinubing to maintain the lead. Daniels was not as lucky, falling to seventh.

"After the hit on the restart, [the car] just wasn't the same," Kleinubing said of his bumper sticking out on the side. "It had a little more drag back there at the right rear wheelwell and I could definitely feel it.

"The save was a little bit of luck, but I've got to thank the SCCA for allowing the sequential gearbox, because there's no way I would have caught the car without it."

On the penultimate lap, Kleinubing bobbed in the Carousel, allowing Saini to pull alongside. The two ran cleanly through the Carousel and drag-raced to the daunting Kink. Neither driver willing to lift, they went side-by-side at speed through the Kink and down the back straight before Kleinubing re-took the spot under breaking into Canada Corner.

"I made a mistake in eight and Jason got alongside me, and I'm like 'oh boy, here we go,'" Kleinubing said. "We went side-by-side at the Carousel and through The Kink and I almost thought we weren't going to make it. He gave it back to me at Canada and I was able to open it up a little bit on him after that. It was exciting to watch for sure."

"When [Kleinubing] came back on after going wide, he really tried to defend me," said Saini. "I got up alongside and I wasn't going to let it go. We came up to The Kink and I maybe had a fender on him. I didn't want to lift because then Chip [Herr] would have gotten by. I stayed in it. Pierre gave me room and I gave him room and we made it."

Saini, who started second in the No. 74 Mazdaspeed/Stoptech/Racinghart MAZDA6, was cognizant of the Manufacturers' Championship Presented by RACER, in which Acura holds the lead over Mazda.

“The car wasn’t quite as good in the early stages as I’d hoped,” Saini said. “Acura’s been running really good this year and there’s a manufacturer’s battle to think about. I really wanted to get a Mazda by the front Acura.

“Maybe that’s going to start happening more now. You *can* go side-by-side through The Kink.”

Kleinubing and Saini’s battle allowed Clay to get away and also permitted Herr to close back up to the podium finishers. Right behind Herr, completing the top six were the Acura/RealTime/Eibach/Red Line Acuras of Milwaukee’s Peter Cunningham and Eric Curran. Cunningham turned the race’s fastest lap, with a 2:29.135 (97.715 mph) on lap 10.

For BimmerWorld, it was the successful recovery from its worst weekend as a team at Watkins Glen two rounds prior, where all three team cars were nearly destroyed in the same race-ending accident.

“The body shop and the guys have put so much work in to get the cars ready,” Clay said. “All three cars wrecked – for everyone, it just sucked. To be able to come back two races later and have such a strong weekend shows that the guys really have it in them and have what it takes to win.”

Clay’s teammate Seth Thomas (BMW 325i), James Sofronas (BMW 325Ci), Nick Esayian (BMW 325i) and point leader Kuno Wittmer (Acura TSX) completed the top 10.

Patrick Lindsey earned both the Sunoco Hard Charger for advancing seven positions in the race and the Racing Electronics Holeshot Award for advancing three positions on the opening lap in his No. 57 Horton Motorsports/Sloan Securities MAZDA6. Lindsey started 19th and finished 12th, but was running as high as ninth before a tangle with Daniels dropped him back.

Despite his 10th place finish, Wittmer held on to the Drivers’ Championship point lead by three over Cunningham (765 to 762). Kleinubing gained on his two teammates, with 760, followed by Herr (672) and Rookie leader Saini (621). Acura leads the Manufacturers’ Championship Presented by Racer over Mazda, 69 to 51.

Today’s race will be broadcast Wednesday, Aug. 20 at 1 p.m. (EDT) on SPEED.

The series next travels to Mosport International Raceway in two weeks. For more information, please visit www.world-challenge.com

Team Mopar Race Report

Mopar Dodge Viper of Cindi Lux Survives Road America Battle Royale with Top-10 Finish NayKid Racing Scores Third Top-10 in Four 2008 World Challenge Races

"In this corner, weighing-in at 3,250 pounds the No. 2 Team Mopar Dodge Viper Competition Coupe of Cindi 'Cin-Bad' Lux. In this corner, the European contender from the island of Great Britain the Aston Martin!" Sunday's Road America Road Race Showcase Featuring SPEED GT could have best been promoted as a 'battle royale' between the biggest names in automobile manufacturing. In a race that saw two cars fully engulfed in flames, Cindi Lux (Aloha, Ore.) brought the Mopar Parts Viper across the finish line battered but still standing in ninth-place. The result marks the 1999 American Le Mans Series Women's Global GT Champion's third top-10 of 2008 including a top-five in Salt Lake City.



Team Mopar Dodge Viper Comp. Coupe in Road America pit lane.

Road America's 4.048-mile, 14-turn has traditionally been very successful for Lux. In her three previous starts at the Elkhart Lake, Wisc.-track, the 12-time road racing champion has won twice - both in the prestigious Sports Car Club of America (SCCA) June Sprints. The Northwest-based operation struggled early in the weekend with the setup searching for the right combination that would allow them to unleash the potential of the Dodge Viper Comp. Coupe. Prior to qualifying, team manager and crew chief Fred Lux (Aloha, Ore.) found the right direction and Lux put the Team Mopar machine onto the grid in tenth position. Lux would spin the tires at the traditional World Challenge standing start. The delay in launching the V10-powered machine quickly cost Lux two positions. Lux unleashed a charge that brought her back into the top-10 and eventually to ninth despite the carnage that rained-down all around her. A door handle-to-door handle pushing match between Lux's American-made supercar and Great Britain's best, an Aston Martin, proved to be one of the most exciting battles of the day. Like two wrestlers climbing to the top of the ropes before the other, the pair leaned on one-another trying to get the advantage. That battle was just

one of many happening all-around the traditional, and fast, Road America facility. In fact, the war raged so hotly that two cars caught fire during the one hour race. The checkered-flag flew in concert with the final of three caution flags that plagued the day's event.

While not without its scars, the Team Mopar Viper left Road America in, relatively, one piece. The Mopar entry will now travel to its summer shop outside of Detroit to make minor repairs and prepare for back-to-back events in Canada and Detroit. Lux, the only road racing member of Team Mopar, will compete next on August 24 at Mosport International Raceway in Bowmanville, Ont., Canada and follow a week later on the Detroit's Belle Isle on August 30.

Originally used in the 1920s, Mopar (a simple contraction of the words MOtor and PARTs) was trademarked for a line of antifreeze products in 1937. Today, Chrysler LLC's Global Service & Parts division is responsible for the manufacturing and distribution of nearly 250,000 authentic Mopar replacement parts, components and accessories for Chrysler, Jeep® and Dodge vehicles sold around the world. To assure quality, reliability and durability, all Mopar parts and accessories are designed in strict adherence to Chrysler Engineering standards.

The Road America round of the GT championship can be seen on SPEED Channel at 12 pm (ET), August 30. Live timing and scoring can be found at: www.World-Challenge.com.

Quotes

Cindi Lux: "Road America was more war than road racing. This was a very physical race. There was a lot of bizarre driving by top-10 drivers. It was pretty intense but it was a lot of fun. For me, personally, I am going to put a call into my Mopar drag racing brothers because I got a terrible start! I was way too aggressive on the throttle and spun the wheels coming off the line and I lost several positions at the start. The Mopar Viper took its beating and banging during the race but rebounded great. We'll clean it up and head to Mosport. If this type of racing continues at Mosport, it will be one crazy event! I'm looking forward to keeping the Team Mopar Viper right in the middle of it all."

Information on Cindi Lux is at www.CindiLux.com

Visit Chrysler's Media Services Web site at www.media.chrysler.com for additional Chrysler news. For additional information about Mopar, log on to www.mopar.com or www.moparspeed.com SPEED World Challenge can be found at www.World-Challenge.com