

The commercial activities of businessman Harry Brix (*far left*) enabled Parker Johnstone (*left*) to tackle the full PPG Cup schedule in 1996. With sponsor Motorola pledging its support to the small California-based team for a further three seasons, Comptech owners Doug Peterson and Don Erb (*below left*) should be able to maintain their steady progress. The Motorola Reynard-Honda (*bottom left*) was at its best on the street courses.



Underrated Brazilian Roberto Moreno (*right*) caught the eye with some doughty early-season performances in the Data Control Lola (*below*), to the delight of team owner Dale Coyne (*middle*). A second '96 Lola was entrusted to Hiro Matsushita (*bottom right*).

### **Brix Comptech Racing**

**Base:** El Dorado Hills, Calif.

**Driver:** Parker Johnstone

**Sponsor:** Motorola

**Chassis:** Reynard 961

**Engines:** Honda Indy V8

**Tires:** Firestone

**Wins:** 0; **Poles:** 0

**PPG Cup points:** 33 (13th)

### **Payton/Coyne Racing**

**Base:** Plainfield, Ill.

**Drivers:** Roberto Moreno, Hiro Matsushita

**Sponsors:** Data Control, Mi-Jack, Panasonic, Duskin

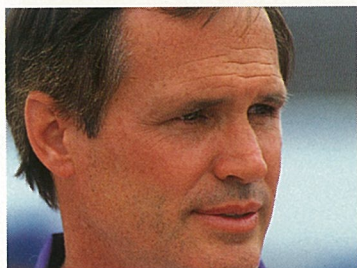
**Chassis:** Lola T96/00

**Engines:** Ford/Cosworth XB

**Tires:** Firestone

**Wins:** 0; **Poles:** 0

**PPG Cup points:** 28 – Moreno 25 (21st), Matsushita 3 (28th)



Sponsorship from Motorola, procured by businessman/racing aficionado Harry Brix, enabled long-time Comptech proprietors Doug Peterson and Don Erb to extend their relationship with Parker Johnstone and, together, embark upon their first full season of PPG Cup competition. Given the obvious limitations of a new team and a budget which allowed precious little testing – and was stretched to its limits by several expensive accidents – both team and driver should be proud of their accomplishments.

The undoubted highlight came at Long Beach, where Johnstone's fascination for auto racing was cemented by a visit to watch the Formula 1 cars compete in the late 1970s. The immensely enthusiastic Johnstone was delighted to qualify sixth fastest, and was almost overcome

with emotion when he held off a challenge from Unser to finish a sensational second. It was no more than he – and the team – deserved.

Johnstone also qualified strongly in Brazil (fifth) and Australia (seventh), and after struggling on the short ovals at Nazareth and Milwaukee, he bounced back by securing fourth on the grid in Detroit and sixth in Toronto. Clearly, Johnstone and vastly experienced race engineer Ed Nathman had concocted an excellent setup for the street courses. The small team, led by veterans Jonesy Morris and Barry Brooke and talented young crew chief Shad Huntley, couldn't match that form on the permanent road courses, although Johnstone did work his way through from 15th to fifth at Portland. Undoubtedly there will be even better days ahead.



The procurement of two new Lola chassis and a top-line driver in Roberto Moreno enabled Walter Payton and Dale Coyne to continue their slow but steady rise in stature. As ever, the budget was tight and allowed virtually no testing, but Moreno, after embarrassing himself by spinning out of the first race even before the green flag, proceeded to score points in four of his next five starts. Included among that string was a spectacular run to third place in the prestigious U.S. 500, comfortably eclipsing Coyne's previous best result, a sixth-place finish by Robbie Buhl at Long Beach in 1993.

Moreno, indeed, ran some laps at better than 232 mph in the dramatic closing stages as he tucked into the draft of race winner Jimmy Vasser and overtook Andre Ribeiro on the

final lap to ensure his position on the podium. Great effort.

Predictably, Moreno struggled in the later stages of the season as other teams were able to gain a better understanding of their cars. He also was hobbled by a series of niggling mechanical problems. Nevertheless, Moreno provided another excellent display in the series finale at Laguna Seca when he hustled hard throughout the race and rewarded his sponsors, Data Control, with another hard-earned PPG Cup point.

Hiro Matsushita, in his seventh year of Indy Car racing, once again failed to make much of an impression. He managed one point-scoring finish, a 10th in Surfers Paradise.

