



# Cole Easdon On Track

Cole Easdon Consultants sponsored driver Claire Tippet continues her challenge on the VW Cup

## Snetterton Season Finale

Despite the absence of championship contender Shaun Hollamby from the Norfolk circuit who was letting the new owner of his Golf R32 get a couple of races in before the end of the season, the grid was as compact and competitive as ever. Exceeding initial predictions that only 19 cars would take to the grid, a staggering 27 racers made the trip to the season's final event .

Congratulations to Claire who has recently passed her racing driver instructors course. It now means that Claire can tutor budding race drivers and also teach those lucky enough to go on track days at the UK's top circuits - and get paid for it! Well done.

Claire had planned to take advantage of the Friday testing sessions to try and get back into her stride in the ATMR prepared Mk1 Golf after the all too brief outing in race two at Brands Hatch. Trouble with some buckled alloy wheels however put paid to too much practice before the qualifying session and some unorthodox methods were needed to get the wheels from the set of wet tyres ready for use with the dry pattern tyres in time for qualifying. Lack of track time and any chance to try set up changes meant that Claire was a bit disappointed to be back down in 24th for the start of the first race of the weekend.



Decisions, decisions...which alloys look wheely good?



2005 VW Cup Championship Winner Phillip House

Race day and Claire was determined to get a decent result and avoid any first corner mayhem. "I started on the row behind both Caddy vans! Nightmare!" Claire explained. Anyone who has been lucky enough to see some of the VW races will remember the Caddy vans, they are very large and tend to make visibility very difficult, not only due to their size and lack of rear windscreen, but also due to the plumes of black diesel smoke that pour off them when they put their foot down! Still, Claire got a good start and managed to stay clear of the inevitable first corner collision. By the end of lap two Claire was up behind the red Caddy van (that had been involved with a big off and subsequent argument with the tyre wall at Castle Combe earlier in the season). Getting a good drive out of the last chicane Claire was able to get a tow from the slip stream and powered past the van on the pit straight. Finding herself in a gap of her own for a while, Claire was then joined by the Diesel Polo that was recovering from the first corner incident. Chasing him for four laps or so, Claire was able to bring her lap times down by nearly a second and crossed the finish line in 15th place. Hollamby's Golf R32 new owner Paul Taylor got a dream introductory race as he took the victory, but in second place was Phillip House who knew that in Hollamby's absence, this would be enough to secure his second successive VW Cup title in his beetle.

Race 2 and Claire got to take advantage of her progress in the first race by starting in 15th place. Another good start saw her make it up to 11th by the end of lap one before an intense battle began with fellow Mk1 driver Stuart Bliss that lasted nearly all race. The pair were fairly evenly matched although Stuart had the advantage of the larger 17" wheels which have a different tread style on the Pirelli tyres that all the competitors in the series must use. The larger tyre tread pattern seemed to help Stuart in the corners as he could close in on Claire, but her Golf with the smaller wheels and different Pirelli tread pattern had the edge on the straights, and there are two very big straights at Snetterton! Claire had got past Bliss on the back straight on the opening lap, but he was determined to repay the compliment. Bliss eventually managed to get through with a clean move, however he then got it all wrong at the chicane and Claire slipped back ahead. Fellow ATMR driver Dave Turner was behind the two battling golfs and was getting a superb view of the action.



Claire & Stuart Bliss battle it out at the chicane.



The ATMR drivers: Claire, Lloyd Allard, Dan Lade and Dave Turner.

Meanwhile up the front of the pack Paul Taylor was once again leading the way, highlighting the point that the four wheel drive Golf R32 really is the car to beat in the championship, and the other ATMR driver, Lloyd Allard was trying to do just that in his diesel golf, chasing Taylor home to finish a fantastic second and clinch an overall championship position of 4th - best of all the diesel cars! Meanwhile, Claire and Stuart were still nose to tail, but then Bliss' engine decided it had had enough of this racing lark and gave up with a few laps to go. Claire was left to cruise to the finish and she did just that. As she crossed the line for the end of the race she ran out of fuel and cruised to a stand still just after taking the chequered flag. Now that's precision fuel measurement - or was it a bit of that lady luck at long last?

So, all too quickly, the chequered flag has been waved on the 2005 VW Cup season. However, Claire will be out for another outing in the Golf later this month as she is part of a team in a 6 hour endurance race at Silverstone - best of luck. Well done to everyone involved with the team this season and thank you to all those who made the trips to the circuits to show their support. Keep checking Claire's website [www.clairetippet.com](http://www.clairetippet.com) for the developments over the winter. I'm off to convince the bosses that I should have a company car, something practical and sensible, like a Ferrari....or maybe a Noble....or an Aston Martin....

