

comsol vw challenge

1989 – 2016

Van Der Linde and Pepper Share Phakisa Wins

Sheldon van der Linde (Piazza-Musso Polo) and Tasmin Pepper (Pepper Racing/Campos Transport/Alpine Motors Polo) shared the class A and overall wins when the 2016 Comsol VW Challenge season got underway at Phakisa on Saturday, 27 February. In class B Darren Nathan (Sextrader Polo) had to fight hard to keep defending champion Nic Clarke (Central Technical Services Polo) behind him in both heats while the class C heat wins were shared by Luan Roos (Nathan's Motorsport Polo) and Graham Savage (Goldwagen JHB CBD and Wynberg Golf).



In the morning's qualifying session Pepper showed she will be a force to be reckoned with this season, setting a time 0.76 seconds quicker than the rest of the field. Behind her things were a lot closer with the next four drivers separated by less than half a second. Van der Linde led the chase from Rory Atkinson (Comsol Polo), Waldie Meintjes (LTR / Marty's Body & Spray Polo) and James

Hurley (The Starter Pack Company Polo). Wayne Crous (King Price Insurance Polo) completed the top six.

In class B Nathan set the scene for what was to follow in the races, setting a time 0.46 seconds quicker than Clarke could manage. Andre Calitz (A.C Group & Full Blast Hydraulics Polo) was next up just three thousandths of a second ahead of Mile Stewart (Polo) Jacques Smith (Hydra Arc Polo) and Daine Stewart (Polo) were not far behind in fifth and sixth respectively.

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Roos got the better of the Golfs in class C, taking pole from Elke van Vledder and Savage. Philip Croeser (ATE Polo), series newcomer John Johnstone (Circle Group Polo) and Shaun Crous (Polo) filled the next three spots on the grid for the first race.

When the lights went out to signal the start of the first race Pepper used her pole position to take the early lead but van der Linde had other ideas. He found a way past early on and slowly pulled away, eventually crossing the line over 2 seconds in front of Pepper. While van der Linde had a relatively easy run at the front, the same cannot be said for Pepper. She had her hands full holding off the attentions of Atkinson and Meintjes, the trio crossing the line within car lengths of each other. Hurley and Wayne Crous completed the top six in race 1.

In class B Clarke pushed Nathan through all 8 laps of the race but could not find a way through and had to be content with second. The fight for the final podium position behind them could have gone to any one of five drivers but it when the flag came out it was Daine Stewart in third ahead of his brother, Mile, with Brad Hall (Hellermann Tyton Racing Polo) and Smith rounding out the top six.



Roos withstood all sorts of pressure from the Golfs to take a hard-fought win in the opening class C race from van Vledder and Savage. Shaun Crous was the best of the rest, coming home in fourth ahead of Croeser and Stuart Mack who was out in the Jumbo Golf normally campaigned by Carlo Tong.

In the second race Pepper managed a hard-fought class A win crossing the line a car length or so ahead of van der Linde. Behind the leading duo Atkinson and Meintjes fought it out for third, with Atkinson again managing to claim the final podium position. Hurley and Crous both had car problems but were classified fifth and sixth respectively.

In class B it was again the Nathan and Clarke show, the pair again opening a comfortable gap on the chasing pack which was led by Hall. He took third ahead of Daine and Mile Stewart with Francois van Zyl (Jesus Saves Polo) in sixth.



A safety car intervention to allow marshals to remove a car stranded in a dangerous position made Savage's class C win even easier than it otherwise probably would have been. He managed to get a couple of the slower class B cars between him and his main rivals and went on to take a comfortable maiden win. Van Vledder had to settle for another second place ahead of Shaun

Crous. Mack took fourth ahead of a recovering Roos, who had an off-track excursion early on in the race, and Johnstone.

Overall victories on the day went to van der Linde in class A, Nathan in class B and Savage in Class C.

The next outing for the Comsol VW Challenge brigade is at Zwarkops Raceway on Saturday, 19 March as part of the Extreme Festival.

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