

Saturday 28th April saw the start of the Dunlop Great & British Mini Challenge, and Andover Racer Dawn Boyd's first full race season. The Norfolk sunshine made an appearance during the weekend of 3 races, making it a hot first weekend of the season. The Mini Challenge grid is formed with Mini Coopers 1600's but 18 cars are Club Class 133bhp and 17 are the S class with 210bhp! Dawn races the Club Class.

Saturday consisted of practise session in the morning, 15 minutes qualifying at lunch time and the last race of the day. Dawn's practise went very well, seeing her take 2 seconds off her earlier track day times, clocking a 1m30s, however qualifying was very difficult as the cars were mixed in classes and it was difficult to find some free space for clear fast laps. Dawn ended up 1 second off her best times in 13th place on the grid (30th in total). Race 1 was a standing start and Dawn got a clean start but wheel spin prevented a good pull away. This was Dawns first race where those around her were of similar standard instead of seasoned veterans and it was very close race action. "I was catching the 2 in front of me on every corner and nearly bumped them, but chose a 'clean' battle and had to settle for my 10th place". Dawns best lap time was 1m29.9s, only 9 tenths of a second slower than the winner!!

Race 2 was late Sunday morning, ("nice to have a lie in!") another 15 minute race and this time Dawn knew what to expect. With grid positions created by the 2nd best qualifying times Dawns consistent racing found her in 13th on the grid again. Another standing start but this time Dawn had a real flyer taking 3 positions as the lights went out. It was a very tight fight again and she managed a few overtaking manoeuvres, some had to be done on the very fast 95mph corners needing lots of the newly-gained confidence. With close battles it was sometimes difficult to see the cars in front through the dust on corners and at one point, the dust cleared to suddenly reveal a mini on 2 wheels! some quick steering to avoid it was needed and another place was gained! Most places gained were kept and Dawn finished 11th in class.

Race 3 was 30 minutes and a rolling start (you've guessed it! 13th again!), something many drivers had not done before and it didn't work too well. The grid was spaced too far apart as racing began and it was impossible to catch up in the field, groups of 4s or 5s had their own battles and it was even closer than previous races, fighting for positions in the corners made for some great spectator viewing. With the longer race there were times to lap slower cars and this made for a more challenging race. "I had a battle with Sarah Parsons, my team mate, for most of the race, she managed to pass me because her brakes failed but every time I gained the place back I messed up and she came straight back in front, on the last 2 laps a slower car had to be lapped and made space that could not be reclaimed". Dawn finished 10th again, but was very pleased with her first weekend of racing and has every confidence the results will soon be into single figures.

more details of Dawns racing can be found at [www.dawnontrack.co.uk](http://www.dawnontrack.co.uk)