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## INSIDE MARIA COSTELLO'S WOMEN ONLY TRACK



*Squash Falconer has climbed Aconcagua in Argentina, summited Cho Oyu in Tibet. She once rode a motorbike to France, scaled Mt Blanc and then flew from the summit, all in a normal day for Squash! Her numerous adventures often involve bikes, but they're usually a bit more off-road orientated, so it was about time she hit the track.*

Here are her impressions after heading onto the famous Donington Park circuit in Leicestershire with racer Maria Costello and 50 other women on a BMW Track Day.

"I pushed my left foot down and felt the click as the bike shifted to first. My hand gripped the throttle and I felt my heart beating faster as my eyes focused ahead.

Maria's words echoed through my mind: "You can ride your bike on a tarmac road and this is just another beautiful piece of tarmac, just warm the tyres up on the first couple of laps."

One of my favorite feelings in the world - accelerating on a motorbike from 0 to 60mph in a flash - and that dizzying pleasure as my tummy turns like I'm on a fair ground ride makes me grin every single time.

The starter's arm dropped and we were off!



And with that my BMW track day at Donington Park was underway. I was a part of Maria Costello's women's only group. I'd met Maria earlier in the year at BMW Motorrad days in Garmisch - I'd already heard about her women's only track days and couldn't wait to get myself booked on one.

Maria is above and beyond a track day rider, she recently made history at the Isle of Man Classic TT where she stormed to third place in the Senior race. In the process she became the highest placed solo-female rider in TT history.

I was nervous when I arrived, I'd only ever done one track day and it hadn't gone that well...! It was raining and cold and before I'd even hit the track I'd dropped the bike. Luckily I was going slowly and no damage was done, but it was enough to shake my confidence more than a little bit.

This was a very different day - the sun was shining and it was perfectly warm. It quickly became clear there was a range of experiences; some women were there for the first time while others had been doing track days for years.

Maria briefed us about the day: we'd have five track sessions, 20 minutes each and we could follow her or one of the other instructor's or, of course, ride on our own. Then between sessions we'd meet in the pits for coaching, questions and tips from Maria and her team.



"Warm the tyres up," I repeated Maria's words like a mantra in my head. It's so easy to open the throttle on the BMW S 1000 RR and reach speeds far faster than intended. The first few laps were steady, I needed to get used to the track, to feel the camber and understand the turns. The group wasn't too big and with a staggered start there was plenty of space and very few riders around me.

I had two main areas I wanted to work; my line around the track and my body position on the bike. I wanted to concentrate less on speed, as I knew getting the other things right meant the speed would come by itself. I was behind Rupert, one of the instructors, during the second session and his line was perfect. It made so much sense as I followed him, feeling the corners straighten out.



Then we focused on my body positioning and went back inside the pits to do some work on a stationary bike. I had it all so wrong! The difference back on the track after talking through it on the stationary bike made a world of difference. With each session the group collectively rode faster and faster. Everyone's confidence and skills were growing and I was starting to feel at one with the bike.

I was amazed at how quickly I was feeling a difference with my riding. I loved it!

I found Maria in the pits before the final session and asked if I could follow her for a few laps around the track. She beamed, "Of course, let's go!" It's pretty cool to be sharing the track with Maria Costello!



She rode effortlessly in front of me and I did my best to follow her line and hang off the side of the bike through the corners. One day I'll get my knee down!

I finished the day on a real high. I felt like I'd not only improved my riding but I also understood what I had to work on and knew where to focus my efforts.

I'd recommend a track day to any rider who wants to improve on a bike - and if you are a woman and feel slightly intimidated by the prospect - join an all-female track day with Maria - you'll love the experience!"



You can follow Squash on her adventures via [Twitter](#) or [her website](#).

Be sure to watch Maria Costello's [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) for all the latest on her racing achievements and when she's next hosting a track day.

[Learn all about BMW Track Days with Focused Events.](#)