

On Track...

A Newbie's View - Mosport Powell Circuit Sept/98

by Diane Dale



When do we get on the track?and where is that sunshine!



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"You're going to w h a t ? ! ? ! ? "
Friends and family were astonished... their reactions, mixed... "what if you wreck your car?", "what if you get hurt?"

(note the order of concern here!)

All this flack because I decided to join OZC at the Mosport Powell circuit for lapping day on September 26th...

Ok... so here I am, up at 6:00am on a Saturday morning, getting me and my '92 300ZX TT prepped to take the drive to Mosport; a little nervous and a little intimidated. I've just joined the OZC, don't know anybody in the club, and haven't a clue what a lapping day really is - am I nuts? Am I getting in over my head?

The drive up isn't helping my confidence (although it is making me laugh a little)... complete fog is covering the road, rain is in the forecast (is lapping day cursed?), there are 3 Porsches on my tail and I miss the turnoff. Finally rolling through the gate - I make out a couple of tents, and a couple of zed's. I guess I'm in the right place. Someone wanders over to say hello and offers to walk me around the track. Wow... step one (a small leap for mankind, it all happens in slow motion - hey, don't laugh - it's my first time remember!) I step onto the track. The fog is lifting. Cool. A whole new perspective - this curvy, cornered kart track doesn't look

so intimidating anymore - it is now starting to look like a whole bunch of fun!

More cars are arriving... (You guys travel in packs for effect right? - it works!). Wow - what a beautiful collection, most of the cars I saw at the Zed-fest a couple of weeks ago. Now I get to see them in action. And fast friendships... there's no hesitation... the bantering and excitement starts before anybody even gets out of their cars. And somewhere, deep down, I realize I've found a great group of people bonded by their passion for Zed's - and I already feel like I fit in (despite the comments about the overgrown gopher holes on the back of my car! Ah - but they'll be jealous by the end of the day!)

First item on the agenda - tech and helmet check. Next - the drivers' meeting. All the rules, regulations and release forms are communicated. Then finally, the moment comes

- out on the track for an orientation lap. Back to the classroom for us new people while the A-group of experienced people start up on the track...wow - look at them go! There's quite a few like me... we start learning about seating position, braking, throttle control, apex of the corners and how to watch and communicate with the track marshal. Before I know it - I'm lined up in the staging

area... instructor in the passenger seat - ready to go. And we're off! The first lap's slow... learning the corners, feeling the edge of the track, setting up the next corners, using the brakes, the throttle... what a thrill! A few more laps and we're right in the swing of things. This is incredible! I'm driving and handling my car like I've never done and never would do on regular roads. This is what driving is supposed to be!

Throughout the day, as groups take turns running laps, the experience really evolves. I learn about the skill, the focus and the concentration required to drive well - this track is about corners and not necessarily speed. The better you knew the corner, and the more you practice it, the faster and smoother the lap is. I learn



how to feel the limits of my car...and-hey - where else can you do a 180 in the rain without a scratch? The lapping day is so well organized and run... never once do I get that sick gut feeling that either myself or my car is in danger of getting hurt. Everybody's talking and sharing their experiences, instructors are taking turns helping everyone out. I'm talking shop with quite a few new and experienced

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