

AISLING CULLEN



Age: 22

Club: Mountain Bike Club Cork

Discipline: Mountain Biking

Started Cycling at the age of: 21

Why did you start cycling:

A friend brought me to Glencullen adventure park to rent a bike for the day as we both liked outdoor adventure activities and I was instantly hooked by the feeling of freedom flying down the hill.

What is your favourite thing about cycling?

The community. Everyone is so friendly and kind and just willing to help out newbies.

What have been your cycling highlights?

That's a hard one it's all been fantastic! Definitely the ladies days out have been the best times I've had on a bike. Anytime I conquer something on the bike it feels like a major highlight but being able to ride my local trails for the first time was a major feat as the first time I saw them, I walked up and down and decided I was never going back as they were too hard.

Do you have a quote that you live by or inspires you?

"Let go and flow" (Heard it from Ryan Leech). Whenever I am overthinking a particular section of trail or I start thinking about what could go wrong, I go to the top of the trail and remind myself that I need to let it all go and just flow with my bike and the trail.

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A D V O C A T E

What has been your involvement in cycling, your story?

After that first day at the GAP, I did some Facebook searching and found the Ladies Who Shred group. I was quickly convinced to buy a bike and with the help of the group, I purchased my first mountain bike in March 2020 right in time for the first covid lockdown. I wasn't in the sport long enough to know any suitable local trails so I started doing some YouTube inspired 'backyard drills' and eventually in April I signed up for some very affordable online mountain bike coaching. I loved the program so I kept it up and continue to practice the skills daily. It also inspired me to really get into the metal fitness aspect of mountain biking which has been and continues to be a major part of mountain biking for me. I can't afford major crashes and I'm learning how to work with this fear daily!

After the first lockdown, I attended a few girls beginner days out which were fantastic for learning and meeting other girls. Knowing no-one at home that mountain biked, some of the cork girls I met through those days out added me to their group and I joined MBCC.



On my first MBCC spin one of the guys in the club put me in contact with a group at home in Waterford and happy days, I now have biking buddies at home and all over the country! I just attended the recent Liv Ladies spin and it was fantastic to catch up with everyone I met over the summer and to see how everyone has progressed to trying some enduro trails and to see even more ladies coming along to give biking a go.



A D V O C A T E

What would you say to other females who may be interested in cycling?

If it's mountain biking give the Ladies Who Shred a Facebook search! They're so helpful and accommodating, the more experienced ones are always more than happy to give advice and there's plenty of complete beginners and people just starting so you won't be alone. Getting some coaching and joining a club are a great way to get into it as well.

How do you feel cycling has benefitted you?

The biggest benefit would be a social outlet I think. It has been great to be able to get together with other similar minded people and let go of whatever else is going on in life and just have the craic. Riding with or without people, biking gives me a sense of freedom of getting out of the daily stresses and just leaving them at the top of the trailhead. When I come back down from the trails I always feel more equipped to deal with anything and have an overall physical and mental feeling of achievement and goodness.



How do you feel about becoming a Bike Like Me Advocate?

Delighted really! I was lucky enough to get amazing help and support from the girls when I started out and it inspired me to continue biking, delighted to be given the chance to be a part of it and hopefully encourage more women. Looking forward to organising some stuff for 2021 whether its in person (fingers crossed!) or online.