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Why The Ugliness Of Cycling Shorts Is Surpassed Only By Their Importance

By Alastair Hamilton

Non-riders have a tendency to laugh at the shiny, often gaudy cycling clothes worn by even casual bicyclists, but if they rode even a few miles, they would understand that cycling shorts are second only to a helmet in crucial importance to the rider. Cycling shorts may not be made for fashion, but they provide a critical element of comfort to any kind of bicycling effort.

The first cycling shorts were nearly more work than worth. Made of wool, with a leather chamois stitched for padding in the crotch of each pair, they were hot and they were nearly impossible to launder. The wool took forever to dry, and the leather became so stiff it often hurt more than it helped. Today's cycling shorts are as far from these old models as our laptops are from main frames. They weigh next to nothing, they dry in no time, and their padding stays soft and supple, just as it's supposed to be. With or without straps (the so-called "bib" style), a pair of cycling shorts is essential for any bike rider.

Really, the only thing today's cycling shorts have in common with their ancestors is their style. With the exception of some of the models made for mountain biking, cycling shorts are still long enough to cover most of the rider's thigh and basic black is still the predominant color. However, any ride through a town with a sizable population of road riders will also reveal what passes for fashion sense among bicyclists: the basic black cycling short is now frequently festooned with so many advertisements for events and products and companies in the most garish colors on the spectrum that the black is all but unseen! For some reason, road riders seem to thrive on clashing colors and excessive advertising. And the more devoted a cyclist you observe, the more logos and screaming slogans you are likely to observe!

Still, there is a real reason to wear cycling shorts, no matter what they look like: their padding. It, especially if combined with a good bicycle seat, will vastly increase your comfort level as a rider. It, rather than a particularly delicate area of your anatomy, will absorb a lot of the shock of bike riding. Cycling shorts are made as they are for good reason. They absorb shock, let perspiration evaporate, and keep you aerodynamic on your bike. Being aerodynamic matters to speed, of course, but also to safety. Loose fitting clothing can get stuck in a bicycle's moving parts as well as making your form more resistant to any wind you encounter.

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Find further information on cycling shorts at

<http://www.bike-cycling-reviews.com>

, your online resource

on road and mountain biking reviews, the hub of cycling information:

<http://www.bike-cycling-reviews.com/clothing/bicycle-shorts.html>

Ask Yourself These Questions When Shopping For Cycling Jerseys

By Alastair Hamilton

Runners can run in nearly any clothing as long as they have running shoes, but bicyclists practically require the highly specialized apparel of their sport. Even casual bike riders will benefit hugely in comfort, speed, safety and satisfaction if they don cycling clothing. Your bicycle itself may demand cycling shoes and your first experience with the chafing and pounding of a bike seat may convince you to wear cycling shorts, but you should also, less obviously, ride in a cycling jersey.

Cycling jerseys will not significantly add to your speed or safety, but they will definitely enhance your total riding experience in several ways. One, they are made to help your body deal with the energy draining impact of wind and weather as you ride. Most cycling jerseys are made of synthetic fabrics that will allow your body to perspire and wick the resultant moisture efficiently from the surface of your skin. Some of today's miracle fabrics, though lightweight as can be, also work powerfully to repel water and resist wind. Combined with the fact that zippered jerseys can be easily opened or closed in the front to allow or discourage air venting, cycling jerseys add enormously to the bicyclist's ability to withstand variations in weather conditions.

What is most cherished by riders about cycling jerseys, though, is simpler. It's the famous back pocket, standard and requisite equipment of any jersey. Whether you are a touring rider, a mountain maniac, or a road racer, the back pocket of your jersey is what Mama Kangaroo's front pocket is to her joey: Life. In this pocket, you will stash energy bars, goo packets, maybe bee pollen. This is your basic on-bike sustenance kit. Into this seemingly endless storage chamber, you will stuff the gloves you no longer need now that the sun's come out, and even the cell phone prudent cyclists carry (for safety, not for idle chatter). Your litter should also be stuffed into this pocket as you consume food. It is amazing what all goes into this pocket, and all without significantly impacting the efficiency of your cycling.

So go ahead. Wear a jersey. Wear it as gaudily as you like. Gaudiness and its companion brilliance, are your birthright as a bicyclist!

Alastair Hamilton is a successful writer who contributes adding technical articles on bikecycling to

<http://www.bike-cycling-reviews.com>

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.He helps riders to find the best components and apparel for road

and mountain bikes. If look for cycle clothing you may be interested to read

<http://www.bike-cycling-reviews.com/clothing/bicycle-jerseys.html>



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