



Coach-Athlete Q&A

A look at some coach-replies to common questions by topic.

Q: Sonni -- **Subject:** Re: 650 wheels

A lot of the tri bikes that are the size I need come only with 650 wheels. I am 5'5" and a half. Should I go with the 650s?
Thanks. MN

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A: [This is my opinion.....but an opinion based on the feedback of well over 150 bike-fits in 3 years:]

Yes.....FOR YOU this (650c) works as well for sizing reasons. AND, there is **said** to be no speed difference between 700c and 650c (although nearly **EVERYone** comments that 700c wheels hold their momentum better/longer.....which was my OWN experience).

But, again, we come back to the principle of '**positioning**'.

I know of only 2 or 3 bikes (Kestrel KM40 & a Softride Rockett TT are 2) that are 650c AND not seat-tube angled @ 78degrees.

In other words, nearly **EVERY 650c bike is set @ 78degrees**. And, Maria, I cannot tell you how many bike fits I've done where I had to jam the seat ALL the way back.....dropped the plumb-line from the tubercosity (under the knee).....only to STILL have it swinging out by the toes and FAR away from the pedal-spindle (which is ideal). To which I look @ the person and say, "This is as good as we get on THIS bike."

So, again.....it's not tubing shape, frame material, or even wheel size that makes **the** big difference. These factors all represent 3-10% improvements in speed or comfort over the long haul. **POSITIONING** represents 50 to 70% because it directly affects speed (*through wattage output and your ability to produce this @ lowered hr's*) & comfort (*ability to stay aero*).

So.....if I'm in the market for a new tri-.....the PRIMARY thing I'm looking for is a bike that is **NOT @** one of the extremes of seat-tube-angle. I would consider nothing @ 73-74 degrees (true road geometry).....and nothing @ 78degrees.

I would either find a 75.5 or 76degree bike (there are a few out there).....or find one that has an adjustable angled fit (like the Soloist that I gave you the 'heads-up' on). And I recommend this after 3 years of riding 5 bikes (2 road bikes @ 74degrees.....a custom bike.....and a tri-specific Litespeed Tachyon @ 78degrees/650c {which was the worst of all}).

What people don't understand is that one's bike fit is an evolving process. It literally can take from 6months to 1 year.

And we can only get it within 95% of "*perfect*" while sitting on a trainer.....that last 5% is "dialed in" through **months** (speaking from experience, here) of trial-&-error out on the road w/ fine-tuning and, further, small adjustments. Now.....knowing this, you wouldn't want a FIXED position that may not allow for that "IDEAL" later on.

One of the greatest abilities a bike has is FLEXability (to be able to match YOUR "ideal").....whether 650 or 700, whether titanium or carbon or aluminum, etc...

Sonni