

Coach-Athlete Q&A

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

Q: One last question.....what do you think about the "**power-crank**s"? Rode on a pair this weekend. Seems like an interesting concept. Do you think it is a gimmick or something that translates into improved cycling efficiency?

J.S.

A: Interesting you should ask.....because I have a pair and have used them since January. "Interesting" because both Frank Day and Cid (@ I/O) are waiting on my "product review" of them. But I'd like to go a whole season before I write it.

In a quick nutshell.....here's what I've found:

-the bad-news.....I have not increased raw maximum bike-power, **yet**. Now, this may be because I haven't used them **exclusively outdoors** like Frank suggest. That's just not feasible around here where I live w/ some of the 2-3mile climbs I have.

I HAVE, however, ridden them for up to one hour outside, though. Ideally, I wish that I had a 20mile loop that was just "rolling".....but, here, the climbs are pretty tough and it would make all my rides about 1hour. **I THINK they have improved sustained power**.....I just haven't been able to use them **exclusively**, yet.

[**Note:** since I replied here, I HAVE had the opportunity to use the pc's outdoors and exclusively and DID see average-wattage values increase @ given heart-rates. It was VERY difficult to acclimate to using them @ the same speeds as my normal cranks. This took about 3-4 months, but the results were quite noticeable.]

-the good news.....my pedal-stroke efficiency HAS gotten ALOT more fluid. A **WHOLE LOT**. My 1st ride on them was only 11minutes long and I felt that, after a few years as a Cat-2 then 1 & pro-cyclist.....that my mechanics were already pretty good. A had a rude awakening!

I can now ride 2+ hours on them.....all of it indoors. And my hip-flexors are tired and a bit sore.....so I know it's helped.

-the best news.....We have 4 people using them, now (including myself). EVERY SINGLE ONE OF THEM has improved his/her **run** (both off the bike and in open 5k's) as a result. The strengthening of the hip-flexors has been dramatic for all.

One gal.....who was a NCAA Div-2 All-American Track star for 400/800m just ran the fastest 5k that she's ran in YEARS.....and, because of an Achilles injury, she's running less than 10miles each week.

Jared Reed went from a 19:05 5k in May to a 17:11 5k in just 3 months.

I, after having an Achilles injury in feb/mar/april of this year (2002).....had run ZERO MILES @ one point (but rode the pc's alot in that time).....within 3 weeks of running again, I ran 16:40 (only about 40seconds off of where I should've run) in the 1st 5k of a local Biathlon in May.

With everyone.....it seems that they help you run 'off-the-bike' even more than they help your 'non-bike' run. My run splits this year in an open 5k are about the same as previous years.....my off-the-bike splits are about 20-40seconds faster.....no question about it.

Call me if you want to talk more about them. They do help. Recently, I've decided to speak to a local speedway about using their track once a week so that I can use the pc's for power on **OUTside rides**.

{I wrote this in 2002.....since then, I **HAVE** used them outdoors and have seen both power and efficiency gains. BUT.....it's critical to understand that the adaptation process take a long time w/ them.}

sd