

STUDIO



Coach-Athlete Q&A

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

Q: I was thinking of getting race wheels for my bike and wanted your opinion on that idea in general and then if you can give me a couple of options on brands. Also I use clinchers now and so the tubular vs. Clincher thing comes up as well. I have Spinergy X-Aero 650 clinchers on my Kestrel km-40 Tri bike and was looking at the Zipp 404 or Bontrager Race wheels. But I don't know what is better and at what price point.

Any help is appreciated.....Thanks.....**JV**

A: Hi JV,.....Sonni here. You may, in fact, see a slight speed increase from going from one deep-dish wheel (x-aero) to another (404 or Bontrager).....but I'm not sure that you'll see an appreciable gain.

In my opinion, if pure speed is what you're after (**that is:** maximizing your wattage/aerodynamic effort @ a given "cost" on hr), then your best option would be to find a racing wheel-set that offers substantial gains in avoid wind drag.

The rear wheel:.....there is NO more aero a wheel than a disc. Want proof? Just watch the tour-de-France. Wind tunnel test prove that a disc is the fastest wheel you can ride. If you're not a disc fan, (due to their slight weight increase or attention to handling in windy conditions).....then there are several wheels that are very "disc-like".....like a Hed-3 on the rear.

The front wheel:.....this is the most important because it's hits the wind 1st. Now you don't want a disc here. A front wheel is FAR more wind-affected than a rear.....so going disc-like is best here as well.....again, Look @ the tour riders. The Hed-3 has been found to be the fastest of several front wheels ever tested.

So.....for speed, you can go w/ a HEd-3 front/rear combo.....or a /hed-3 front and disc rear combo. These will not be as comfortable as deep-dish rims (x-aero, 404, or bontrager).....or as light. But faster for sure.

As far as tubular vs clincher, I prefer Tubular for race wheels. They're lighter, don't have the rim-lips that clinchers must have to hold a tire bead on, [and therefore as less susceptible to pinch flats].....and hold more air pressure {so don't explode in the heat as easily).

And if you have a flat on the course.....it's a quicker change w/ the tube sewn in the tire.

The down-side.....you need a shop (or learn yourself) to glue them on. But it's worth it.

hope this helps.

Sonni Dyer