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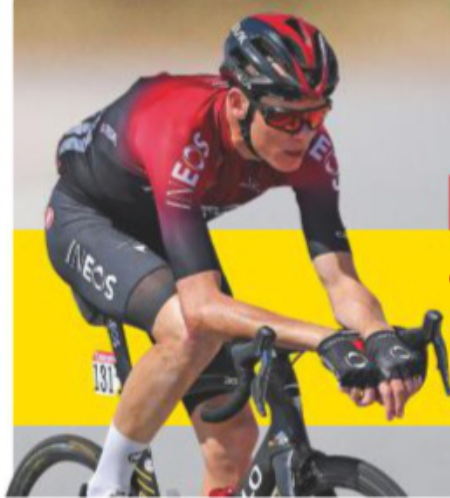


UAE TOUR

Coronavirus hits pro
peloton, plus **Chris
Froome's** comeback

FUTURE STARS

Meet the next crop of
British riders set to hit
the big time





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Who would have thought that a few months out from the next Olympics the British men's TP squad wouldn't even be in with a shout of a Worlds medal? They've had bad performances at the Worlds before – Cali 2014 the most recent – but never in Olympic year since lottery funding arrived.

The Brits' time of 3.50 was close to their 2016 Rio best (then a world record), and they'll go faster in Tokyo with Olympic kit and Olympic taper, but the fact is they're well off the pace. Six seconds slower than the Danes is an unassailable gulf.

It might be that the Danes have four incredible athletes, but it's not just them who have leapfrogged the Brits. The Italians, French and Germans all went faster and the Kiwis have made giant leaps too. So why haven't the Brits?

Is it the overall pool of riders not being big enough? Is it innovation slowing down, or is it a combination of factors?

The man who helped the Danes move their aero credentials on is Dan Bigham. Bigham has been banging on BC's door for years, desperate to get involved, but they've closed it every time. When you have track racing's most innovative disrupter asking to help and you push him into the arms of your competitors, you know something's wrong.

MY HIGHLIGHTS THIS WEEK

08 Coronavirus hits the peloton

10 Analysis from the **2020 Track Worlds**

38 How deep should your **aero rims** be?

**SIMON
RICHARDSON**

Editor

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Fast food! How to get your protein hit



Cervélo R5 tested

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Photos Daniel Gould, Alex Whitehead/SWPix.com, Amy Stock Photo

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The young Brits to look out for in 2020



Check out the March challenges on page 18

▼ **Top of the world** Elinor Barker waves to the crowd after winning the points race at the World Championships in Berlin as her parents watch on from the stands. Barker had almost told them not to come because they had previously only attended in years when she didn't win anything. More importantly, by winning the fifth world title of her career, she laid down a good marker for her selection for the Madison.

Photo AFP via Getty Images

IN FOCUS





Next three months 'crucial' to Froome's Tour dreams

Brit makes low-key return to racing at truncated UAE Tour, reports *Sophie Smith* in Abu Dhabi

Chris Froome says the Tour de France is "very much so" on his radar after his comeback at the virus-hit UAE Tour from a career-threatening injury, adding the next three months will be "crucial" to his campaign.

The four-time Tour champion wasn't remarkable on the results sheet in the UAE but it was clear from the outset that he wouldn't be a contender eight months after suffering serious injuries.

The Ineos rider was swiftly dropped on the first mountain stage. He yo-yoed and then lost contact with the main group on Jebel Hafeet – the 10km climb that decided stages three, five and the overall – as Adam Yates (Mitchelton-Scott) shot off the front to secure his overall win. Froome, though, smiled when the tempo in the peloton was high but consistent, rather than the all-or-nothing pace usually set in the desert.

"I'm definitely missing the intensity but the main thing for me now is that there is nothing lingering from the injury, holding me back, so I think these next three months now are going to be crucial in the build-up to the Tour de France," Froome said.

"I've got a lot I can take away from this race in terms of just the feelings of being back on the bike again and not having any issues with regards to my previous injuries."

Ineos declined interview requests outside of the race last week, saying the 34-year-old was "prioritising rehab" that he managed

"Nothing's lingering – the injury isn't holding me back"

around each stage, doing strength work in the gym to correct "imbalances". Head coach Tim Kerrison was also on site.

How much that will have been impacted by the couple of days Froome had to spend under quarantine when the coronavirus scare hit the race isn't clear. But he was among those that had been released at the time of going to press and had flown back to Europe.

Froome was hospitalised in intensive care after he fractured his femur, elbow, sternum and vertebrae in a crash on a recon ride at the Critérium du Dauphiné last June. He has undergone several surgeries since, the latest in December.

Italian sports director Matteo Tosatto praised Froome's mental resolve during the UAE Tour, where he worked for team-mate Eddie Dunbar.

"In the race, for the guys in the radio, [he] put motivation like, 'Come on guys!' That's incredible," Tosatto said.

Froome is set to undergo a training block in South Africa before starting the Volta a Catalunya next month. Froome and Ineos have yet to publish his race programme in the build-up to the Tour.





Froome rode UAE Tour in support of team-mate Eddie Dunbar

Coronavirus could punch holes in cycling calendar

David Lappartient, president of the UCI, has said it may not be possible to reschedule races that are cancelled because of the spread of the coronavirus.

The Frenchman said the effect on the sport of the ongoing spread of the virus could be “huge”.

Last week, the final stages of the UAE Tour were cancelled due to two suspected cases of coronavirus among people working on the race. Several races in China, the country where the virus first appeared, have also been scrapped.

At the time of going to press there are fears that coronavirus will start to affect the European season that contains most of the sport’s high-profile races. Strade Bianche is this weekend. Organiser RCS has said it will go ahead unless the situation changes. When asked if it could be rescheduled Lappartient said: “It depends. At the moment the calendar is full; if you want to relocate races it’s much later in the season and you won’t have races in November or December.”

While safety is uppermost in the minds of organisers, teams and the UCI, cancelling or even rescheduling races is likely to have a negative effect on the already precarious economy of the sport.

“When you have a look at what the potential effects are in the season they can be they’re huge,” said Lappartient before cautioning against forecasting the effects of a fast-moving situation.

He added: “It’s a danger for the economy worldwide, not just for the sport. Sport is just one part of this. You can see the first effects on the economy already.”

Photos Getty Images, Yuzuru Sunada



The Tuscan dust may lie dormant this year

Inside the UAE Tour coronavirus lockdown

Sophie Smith reports from her quarantined hotel in Abu Dhabi

I left my hotel room for the lobby in the middle of the night — no make-up, hair a mess and panicked.

I'd woken at 2am on Friday to a WhatsApp group buzzing with news of two positive tests for coronavirus at the UAE Tour where I was working.

In the elevator I scanned issued statements; two people at the race had tested positive for coronavirus and the remaining two stages had been cancelled.

Hours earlier we'd left Dubai, via stage five, for hotels in Abu Dhabi. At 10pm on Thursday an email to media advised us, at the request of local authorities, not leave the hotel "under any circumstances".

I turned the light off in my room and went to bed, sure it wasn't serious. It was.

The Abu Dhabi Sports Council, at 1.30am on Friday, had issued a statement saying the UAE Tour had been cancelled with two stages remaining due to two "confirmed" coronavirus cases.

Just before 3am, race organisers released their own statement, further clarifying that two Italian team staff members from one squad had tested positive.

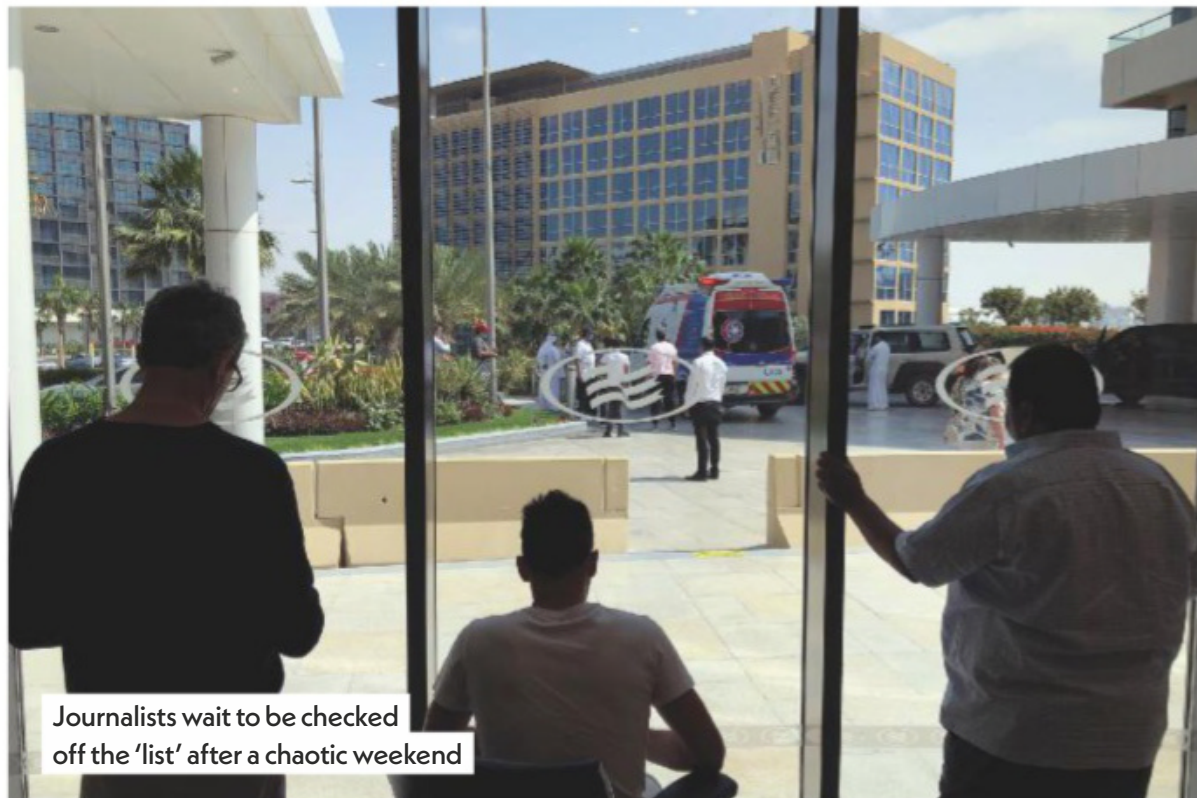
I'd travelled to Dubai a week before without a mask. I'd reassured colleagues concerned about the global threat during the race that there was no cause for alarm.

On Friday afternoon, though, my name was included in the first wave of media to be tested. I went to the lower ground floor and waited.

Over the next 48-odd hours the instruction was the same: stay in your room.

Food was brought to us in brown paper bags, delivered by hotel employees whose faces and uniforms were obscured by protective clothing, masks and gloves.

More WhatsApp groups were created, or people added to them, so we could communicate within our hotel, or with team



staff and riders quarantined in hotels across the road. Embassies were called. Confusion reigned. Reports began to circulate about the validity of the two "positive" cases.

The lack of communication from authorities compounded concern. There was an estimated 600 people from the race tested for coronavirus, something the world is still not readily equipped to manage.

When riders on Saturday night were

murmuring about having to have their names ticked off a "list", journalists were being given strict instructions for travel, including

needing a certificate verifying a negative result and that we would fly home to our country of origin as per passport, which never eventuated. Shuttle times were then sent for airport transfers to make our originally scheduled flights. The first at our hotel arrived on time around midnight, ferrying media and organisers to freedom.

But when I got to the lobby for a 5am shuttle, it never came. No one would be

making the other morning departures scheduled, they said.

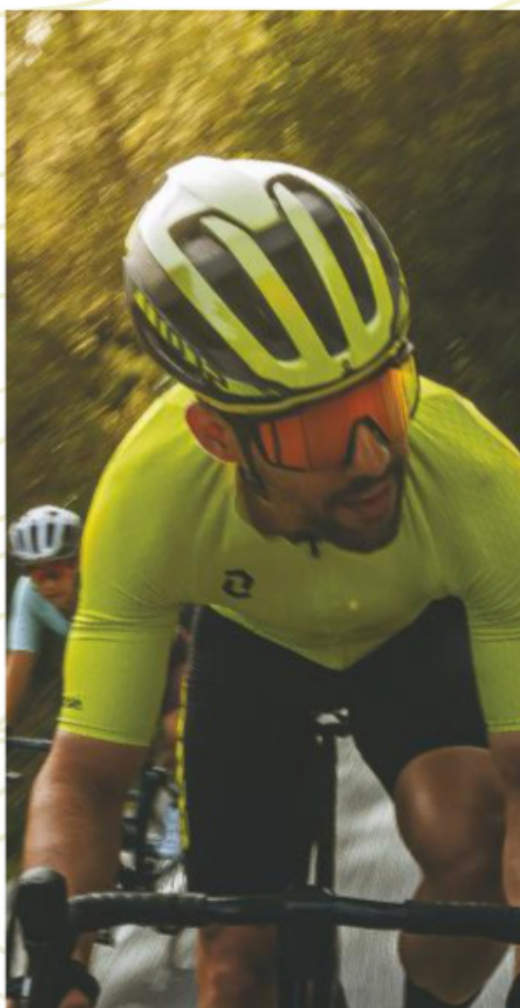
Overnight there'd been unconfirmed reports that two to three people had tested positive for coronavirus at the teams' hotel. Ambulances were seen outside. One floor where the allegedly positive people were staying was quarantined under security guard, the lift disabled. Riders who tested negative but were on that floor I understand couldn't leave and underwent re-testing.

On Sunday around 1pm at our hotel a medical command operation centre employee asked us to wait just "half an hour" more. The hotel doors remained locked to us. The sun was beginning to set when organisers referenced the "list". The instruction now was what riders had recounted earlier: get a confirmed negative test and you can leave; pending and positive results on the list stay.

By the end of the weekend I had more questions than answers, and being part of the exhausting scenario didn't help. But I went to bed Sunday knowing one thing for sure: I tested negative for coronavirus.

"Food was brought to us in paper bags"

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Brit helped Denmark to smash world records

Huub-Wattbike aerodynamicist says it's "scary" how fast the Danish team can still go

At the heart of the Danish team pursuit team's obliteration of successive world records at the Track World Championships last week was a British aerodynamicist.

"I don't know if I can say any names, but it's a guy from Great Britain and it's a Danish guy," said Danish rider Fredrik Madsen after they'd lowered the bar by nearly three-and-a-half seconds in 24 hours.

The "Danish guy" is Casper Folsach, who won bronze in the team pursuit at the Rio Olympics but developed heart problems last season that meant he had to stop riding.

The "guy from Great Britain" may be familiar to regular readers of *Cycling Weekly* as it is Dan Bigham, rider and aerodynamicist with the Derby-based Huub-Wattbike track team.

That team has made waves on the track racing scene with their unusual strategies and approach to aerodynamics and won a round of the World Cup last season. However, with the UCI changing the rule on World Cup participation to exclude trade teams, Bigham, who previously worked for the Mercedes Formula 1 team, found himself with nowhere to ride after the end of the 2019-20 season.

Bigham said: "The Danes have been pretty awesome since we've started racing on the track. They're nice guys, always open and poking and prodding a little bit on what we're doing. They're interested; they just wanted to see what we're up to. About 12

months ago I was chatting with them, saying, 'In 12 months time, thanks to the UCI, I'm out of a ride, I'm interested in the aero side of things, you guys are going really well towards the Olympics and I'd like to help out.'"

He joined as performance engineer in November last year. "It's myself and Casper, we just basically lead everything on the equipment side, whether it's overshoe selection, pedal positions, anything that goes on the bike or the rider that makes them go quicker. Plus data analysis and performance modelling."

That modelling led Bigham to have the confidence to say he "would have put my house" on them breaking the world record in the rounds.

So is that how the Danish team, which has been strong all year, managed to slash the world record? Not quite. "There's not a great deal of aero kit we put on towards this one, which is the scary thought," said Bigham. "Rider position is a major one — we've done a lot on the positioning side."

Danish rider Frederik Rodenberg bullishly said he felt they could get their 4km time down to 3.42 at the Olympics.

While the Danes and Bigham were



The Danish squad on their way to team pursuit gold and a third world record



Bigham's aero expertise helped the Danes

enjoying success, the British quartet, which contains Bigham's good friend and former team-mate Charlie Tanfield, failed to make it to the medal rounds. They are now six seconds off the pace of the world's best. It's a result that has prompted performance director Stephen Park to contemplate scaling back their medal hopes.

But why isn't Bigham working with the British team? "I didn't get offered a job by GB [management]. They actively do not acknowledge me or Huub-Wattbike and what we do. I don't think they like me because my thoughts and ideas challenge how they work. They didn't want my help so

"The Danes suit my and Huub-Wattbike's progressive ethos"



I went elsewhere,” he said. “These guys [the Danes] have gone out of their way to be kind and helpful. I’ve got a lot of time for that and they suit my personal — and Huub-Wattbike’s — ethos, which is about being very progressive and very, I guess, down to earth and just keen to try new things,” he added.

But while the Danes were celebrating and described Bigham and Casper’s contribution as “making a really big difference”, Bigham’s Huub-Wattbike team-mates were understandably less enamoured. Huub-Wattbike are set to go to altitude in Bolivia in April

to try and break the team pursuit, individual pursuit and Hour records. Following the success of the Danish squad, the TP part of that just got a lot harder.

“Don’t underestimate how much I got slated in the team’s group chat yesterday,” said Bigham. “The only saving grace was that Italy went pretty bloody fast [3:46.513

in the first round] as well. So irrespective of what I did the Italians would have done it as well.”

He added: “I always wanted to say that we’d shelve the record in Bolivia. If you’d asked me 12 months ago, I’d have said we definitely can. But I now look at these guys and it’s scary to think what they can do at sea level versus what we can do at altitude.”

Fastest men’s team pursuit times in history				
Rank	Nation	Time	Date	Location
1	Denmark	3.44.672	26/02/20	Berlin, Worlds final
2	Denmark	3.46.203	26/02/20	Berlin, Worlds round one
3	Italy	3.46.513	26/02/20	Berlin, Worlds round one
4	Denmark	3.46.579	26/02/20	Berlin, Worlds qualifying
5	New Zealand	3.47.501	26/02/20	Berlin, Worlds round one
6	Italy	3.47.511	26/02/20	Berlin, Worlds final
7	Australia	3.48.012	28/02/19	Pruszków, Worlds final
8	Australia	3.48.625	26/02/20	Berlin, Worlds round one
9	New Zealand	3.48.742	26/02/20	Berlin, Worlds qualifying
10	Denmark	3.48.762	16/10/19	Apeldoorn, Euros round one
24	Great Britain	3.50.265	12/08/16	Rio, Olympics final



Matt Walls's (right) omnium bronze could point the way for the men's squad

British Cycling eyes strategic shift for Tokyo Olympics

Performance director considers turn away from team pursuit, reports *Vern Pitt* in Berlin

British Cycling performance director Stephen Park has signalled BC may shift focus away from the blue riband team pursuit in the light of the team's Track World Championship struggles.

The men's team pursuit squad did their best qualifying ride ever, but they still appeared off the pace, finishing seventh with a 3.50.341, while the Danish quartet lowered the world record three times, climaxing with a 3.44.672 in the final.

Park hinted that this may mean BC focuses its efforts on winning gold in bunch races rather than the team pursuit.

He said: "It's not just about saying, 'What do we do with the team pursuit?' We have to look at how many men's endurance riders we can take, what events we've got, and where should we best invest our efforts. Which riders and which skills are best required to be able to deliver the best possible medal outcome with the highest likelihood? So when we get back, if we say, 'Omnium is realistic medal opportunity, Madison is a good medal opportunity, team pursuit not so good. Crikey, we're a long way away,' the emphasis needs to change."

That would be a significant departure for BC, which since the introduction of funding from the National Lottery has always focused its efforts on the timed events and won the last three men's team pursuit Olympic titles. That has been a strategy born of the ability to control the performance in those events as luck plays a much smaller role than in bunch races.

Park, however, argued that it was not such a radical change and that he was simply trying to establish where he felt they had the best chance of winning medals, as BC has always done.

The Berlin Track World Championships yielded BC's lowest medal haul immediately ahead of an Olympics since 1999, though one of these was a silver for the women's team pursuit quartet so it appears unlikely that BC will move the focus away from that team.

But Park was keen to manage fans' expectations. "I think the days of any nation winning 10-plus medals have probably gone. I don't think that is a result of GB's performances having decreased, I think that is a result of the level of worldwide competition having increased," he said.

My view

VERN
PITT

CW news editor



My German isn't good enough to allow me to fully understand it, but as Elinor Barker sped to Britain's only World Championship win of the meet in the Berlin Velodrome the commentator was frantically shouting something about the British empire. It's not clear if that was a reference to the Welshwoman's MBE or the cracks appearing in British Cycling's imperial domination in the velodrome.

The mood around the team seemed cautiously optimistic. There was a lot of talk of kit upgrades making the difference. Barker, who also claimed silver in the team pursuit, was one of the highlights of the Worlds, but even she professed to be "excited for new bike day".

In some disciplines that could well be enough. The women's endurance squad remains strong, and deep. The sprint

"THE MOOD IN THE TEAM SEEMED CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC"

men continue to creep up on the dominant Dutch. And Katy Marchant appears to have been given a new lease of life freed from team sprint duties and rode strongly even if she only came away with eighth in the keirin.

But there are serious questions over the men's endurance squad. An impressive bronze from Matt Walls in the omnium did something to restore confidence but the Madison pairing of Ethan Hayter and Ollie Wood, coming off some tough training, looked under-powered; while the team pursuit quartet has the biggest gap of all to close.

One thing was certain, if they do manage to pull off a Tokyo medal haul that comes close to London or Rio it'll be a tighter contest. More likely, having painted the boards pink, the British Empire is starting to break apart.



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Lizzy Banks lays down marker for Flanders

Brit finishes sixth but curses mistake that cost her podium chance, writes *Vern Pitt*

Brit Lizzy Banks is confident she can contend for a podium place at the Tour of Flanders later this month after an impressive sixth place at Omloop Het Nieuwsblad.

The Bigla-Katusha rider had ridden faultlessly to be with the front group on the road when eventual winner Annemeik Van Vleuten (Mitchelton-Scott) attacked to go solo and win. Banks helped power the chase with Van Vleuten never allowed far up the road, but was distanced over the top of the Bosberg.

Ellen van Dijk (Trek-Segafredo) attacked just as Banks was throwing her mud-soaked glasses to the crowd.

"It was a half-second hesitation and lapse of concentration that led to me not being able to hold the wheel but I continued to fight and I refused to let the group behind catch me," she said.

Banks praised her team-mates for taking her into each crucial cobbled section towards the front of the race. The bad weather helped too. "We fully prepared for the weather conditions," she said. "And we could see on the start line that the other teams hadn't prepared for the weather conditions. They were prepared for the weather at the start, rather than the weather during the race.

"So although I was mocked on the commentary for being overdressed, when the 45mph driving rain hit us we were more than prepared." She added she "didn't waste a single drop of energy" on being cold.

Looking ahead to the rest of the Classics season the 29-year-old is brimming with confidence. "I don't believe that any of these riders are any better than I am. I just believe that they're perhaps a bit smarter. And so I see no reason why I can't be that. I've proved that on the toughest stage in the toughest conditions, I can be right up there. And I'm just as strong as these riders, I was

stronger than Chantal [Van den Broek-Blaak] over the Muur."

Although Flanders might be the biggest race of the spring, Banks clearly feels no different about it to any other Classic saying she can be "right up there". "We're hoping for bad weather conditions," she said. "It's an environment that I thrive in. And it's an environment that a lot of riders really, really don't want to race in. There were a lot of big names missing on the weekend and some of them said they were sick."

She wasn't the only Brit putting in an impressive performance. Abby Mae Parkinson was the best finisher for her Lotto-Soudal team in 20th, her best Classics result to date.

In the men's race, won by Jasper Stuyven (Trek-Segafredo), the best British finisher was Scott Thwaites (Alpecin-Fenix) in 24th.



Trek's Jasper Stuyven took the men's Omloop honours

Banks boxed clever at Het Nieuwsblad in full winter fatigues



Ineos's Moscon DQ'd for bike throw

Gianni Moscon was disqualified from Kuurne-Brussels-Kuurne for throwing a bike after a crash on Sunday.

The Team Ineos rider was involved in a fall in the bunch in the final 100km of the Belgian one-day race, and was caught on camera throwing a competitor's bike out of the way, hitting another rider with it in the process.

Moscon was then filmed sitting up, pulling off his race numbers and tearing one up at around 50km to go after he was told he had been kicked off the race for his behaviour.

The crash on a narrow stretch of farm road caused chaos and split the bunch and Moscon was one of the riders caught up in the incident.

The 25-year-old was then filmed picking up a rival's bike from a pile on the floor and throwing it behind him into a ditch.

In the process, Moscon hit another rider with the bike, with the rival then struggling to keep his footing.

This is far from Moscon's first offence. In 2017 he racially abused then FDJ rider Kévin Reza at the Tour de Romandie. He was allowed to finish the race but was later punished by Team Sky.

Then in the 2017 World Championships, Moscon was disqualified from the race after a video of him emerged being towed by the Italian team car following a crash.

Moscon was again embroiled in controversy after FDJ's Sébastien Reichenbach accused the Italian of deliberately causing him to crash. This case was dropped by the UCI because no video of the incident existed.

He was then kicked off the 2018 Tour de France and given a five-week ban by the UCI after he was filmed striking out at Frenchman Elie Gesbert (Fortuneo-Samsic) early on stage 15.



Moscon's 'passion' again makes the press

PREVIEW

Paris-Nice

Sunday 8 March to Sunday 15 March



Nairo Quintana's newfound ability to apparently win as he pleases will be put to the test next week at Paris-Nice — his biggest challenge so far with new team Arkéa-Samsic.

Directeur sportif at the French outfit Yvon Ledanois said the 2014 Giro d'Italia winner would be going to the Race to the Sun with only one result in mind.

"He wants to win Paris-Nice," said Ledanois unequivocally. "He's very excited, he wants the best team with him and he trusts the team now, there are no questions any more."

"We have lot of quality with the riders around him. He likes this race, he knows this race and he knows it's very important," he added.

The Colombian has had a superb start to 2020, winning both the tours of Provence and Haut Var on GC, plus a stage in each.

Quintana had been with the Spanish Movistar team since 2012, winning the Vuelta a España in 2016 as well as the Giro. But the 30-year-old had become disenchanted with the team's three-pronged

approach in the Tour de France and took the bold move of stepping down a level to ProTeam Arkéa, where his team-mates include Warren Barguil and Nacer Bouhanni.

"The last year with Movistar... he had no criticism of the team but everybody knows he wasn't happy with [Alejandro] Valverde, with [Richard] Carapaz... to have three leaders in the same race, it's not easy," Ledanois said.

He put Quintana's new run of wins at least in part down to his move to a team where he was the sole leader and had less pressure to deal with.

"For every rider, if you're free mentally,

it's always better," Ledanois said. "For him it's very important. He's calm, not nervous... He doesn't need to prove anything with us."

"We'll start Paris-Nice with a very strong team at 100 per cent, ready for the crosswinds in the first days, and ready for the last few days because they're hard stages," he added.

However good his form, Quintana will face stern opposition next week, lining up against reigning champion Egan Bernal (Team Ineos), former winner Richie Porte (Trek-Segafredo) and his old team-mate at Movistar Mikel Landa, who now rides for Bahrain-McLaren.

THE ROUTE

Date	Stage	Start	Finish	Distance	Terrain
Sun 8.3	1	Plaisir	Plaisir	154km	Hilly
Mon 9.3	2	Chevreuse	Chalette-sur-Loing	166.5km	Flat
Tues 10.3	3	Chalette-sur-Loing	La Châtre	214km	Flat
Weds 11.3	4	Saint-Amand-Montrond	Saint-Amand-Montrond	15.5km	ITT
Thur 12.3	5	Gannat	La Côte-Saint-André	227km	Flat
Fri 13.3	6	Sourgues	Apt	161.5km	Hilly
Sat 14.3	7	Nice	Valdeblore La Colmiane	166.5km	Mountains
Sun 15.3	8	Nice	Nice	113.5km	Hilly

TV TIMES

Sun 8 March

12:30-14:10 LIVE Stage 1
on Eurosport 1
20:00-21:00 Stage 1
Highlights on Eurosport 1

Mon 9 March

13:40-15:40 LIVE Stage 2
on Eurosport 1
20:00-21:00 Stage 2
Highlights on Eurosport 1

Tue 10 March

13:40-15:40 LIVE Stage 3
on Eurosport 1
20:00-21:00 Stage 3
Highlights on Eurosport 1

Weds 11 March

13:40-15:40 LIVE Stage 4
on Eurosport 1
20:00-21:00 Stage 4
Highlights on Eurosport 1

Thurs 12 March

13:40-15:40 LIVE Stage 5
on Eurosport 1
20:00-21:00 Stage 5
Highlights on Eurosport 1

Fri 13 March

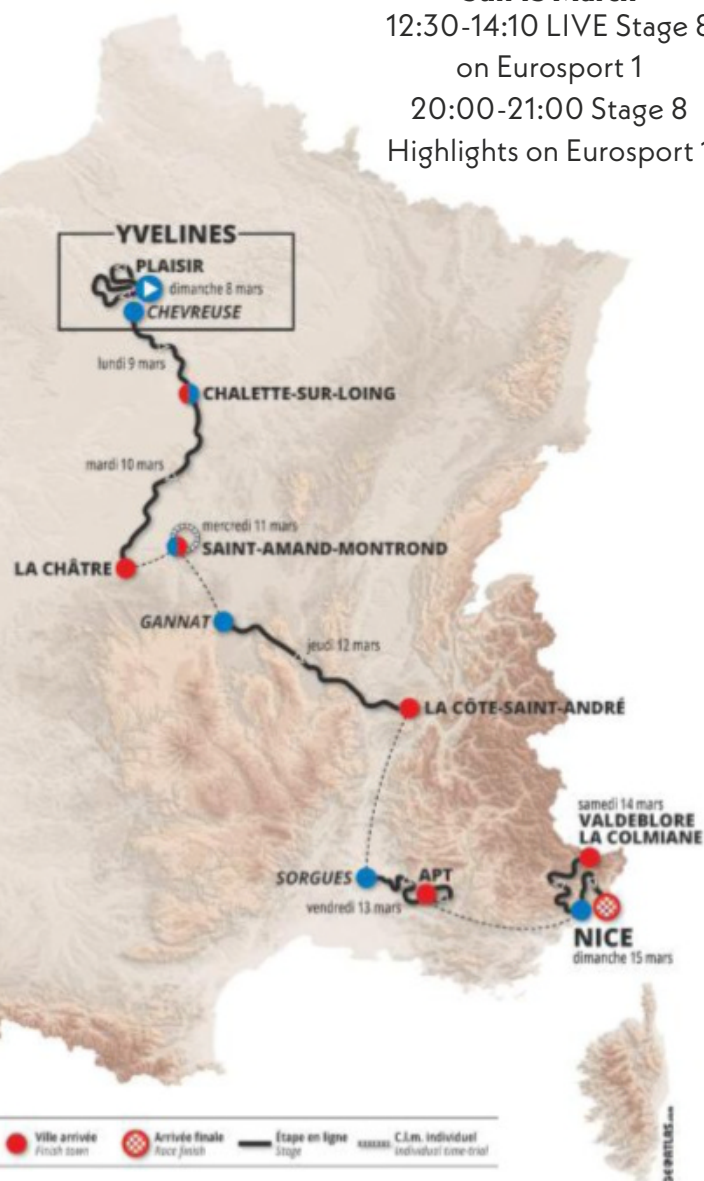
13:40-15:40 LIVE Stage 6
on Eurosport 1
19:30-20:30 Stage 6
Highlights on Eurosport 1

Sat 14 March

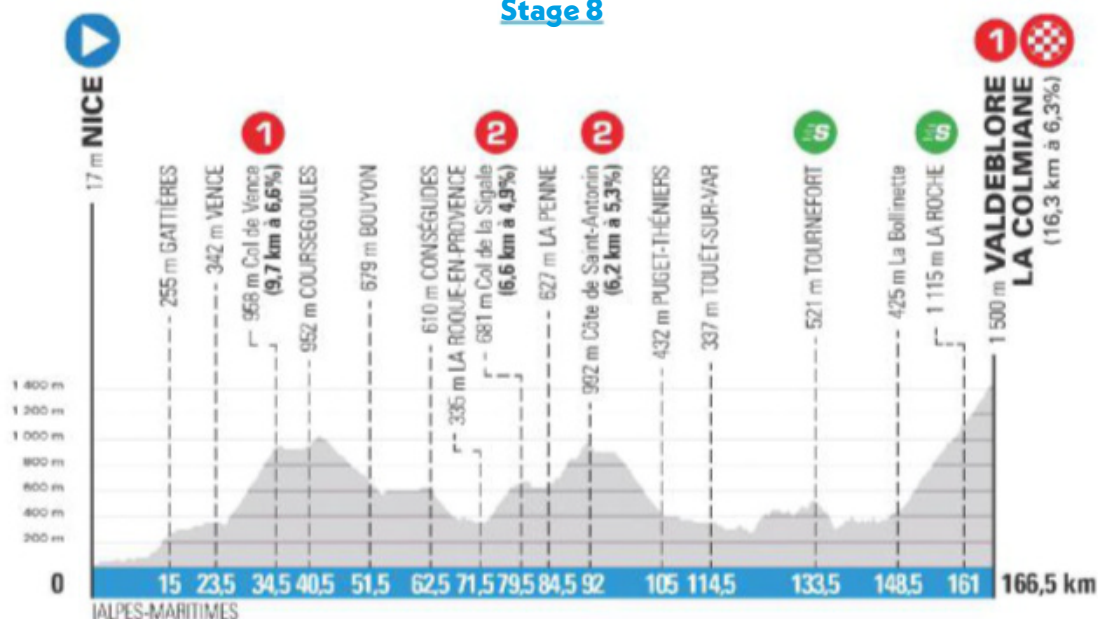
12:10-14:10 LIVE Stage 7
on Eurosport 1
19:30-20:30 Stage 7
Highlights on Eurosport 1

Sun 15 March

12:30-14:10 LIVE Stage 8
on Eurosport 1
20:00-21:00 Stage 8
Highlights on Eurosport 1



Stage 8



CONTENDERS

Egan Bernal (Team Ineos)

However good Nairo Quintana may or may not be this season, Paris-Nice won't be over till the fat lady sings — and in this case the (somewhat unlikely) fat lady is Egan Bernal. Had he won the Tour of Colombia at a canter we'd bet the farm on the Tour champ, but his fourth place might afford his rivals a little hope.

CW rating ★★★★★

Jack Haig (Mitchelton-Scott)

Simon Yates's faithful and very effective mountains domestique from that time the Bury boy almost won the Giro d'Italia, has come into his own this season, perhaps helped by the knee injury Yates picked up at TDU. The Aussie will need to bring his A-game for the time trial here though.

CW rating ★★★★★



Haig's on the up

Richie Porte (Trek-Segafredo)

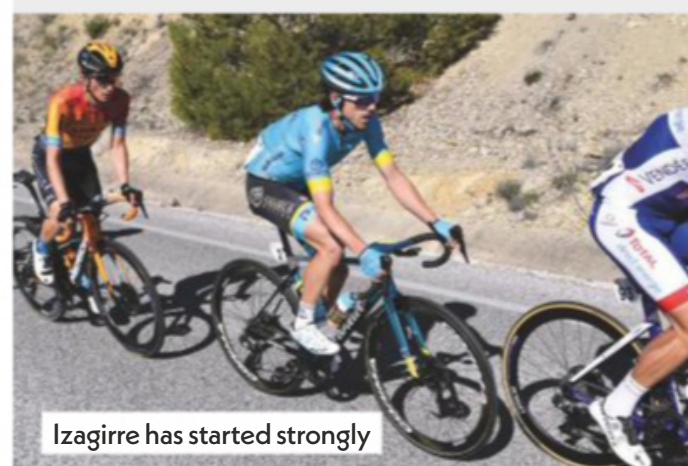
The Australian had a low-key season last year, certainly by his own high standards. But he's a twice winner at Paris-Nice and has made no secret of his Olympic ambitions this year, so expect him to come out of the starting blocks at a canter, at the very least.

CW rating ★★★

Ion Izagirre (Team Astana)

The Spaniard has always been a solid, constant presence as a stage racer, but after a good show last year, winning the Tour of the Basque Country and the Volta Valenciana, he has started hard this season, taking fourth place in February's Vuelta Andaluca. Expect him to challenge here.

CW rating ★★



Izagirre has started strongly



CW5000 March Challenges

Two goals to keep your annual target on track

This month's challenges are sponsored by our charity partner, the Rayner Foundation, formerly known as the Dave Rayner Fund. In 2020 the Foundation is supporting 41 riders living and racing abroad in a bid to progress their careers as cyclists. The Foundation has donated a money-can't-buy prize for one person who completes both challenges: a UCI world champion's jersey signed by Tom Pidcock and Lizzie Deignan. Imagine that framed and hung on your wall. You can donate at www.daveraynerfund.co.uk.

1. Do a point-to-point ride

To think about your routes we want you to do at least one ride from A to B this month,

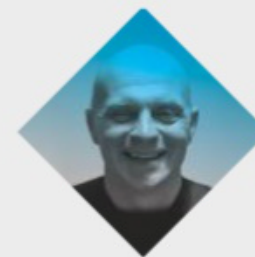
and those two points should be at least 20 miles apart. Most of us ride from our front door and back again, but trying a different route is always worthwhile. You could get a train to somewhere and then ride home (or vice versa), build it into your commute, or ride out to a destination and meet your friends or family, then get a lift home.



2 Gain 7,000ft of elevation in one week

This is the first of the really tough challenges in 2020, and we expect you'll need to log around 130 hilly miles in one week to do it. That works out around 53ft of climbing for every mile you ride or more simply 1,000ft of climbing every day. Plan your routes and hit those hills. Sign up to the challenge at www.cyclingweekly.com/cw5000

CW5000 RIDER PROFILE



Name: Simon Hickman

From: Kent

Riding since: August 2014

Why did you sign up to the CW5000? It's motivated me to get out on the bike during the dark winter months a bit more than I normally would, but any excuse to get out on my bike is a good one!

How many miles have you done so far in January and February?
2,802 miles.

Are you following a training plan, or just riding? I'm not currently following a training plan – but that's subject to change.

What's been your longest ride?
This year, 102 miles.

Have you suffered any setbacks?
I slipped a disc in my lower back during the Tour of Cambridgeshire in 2019. That kept me off the bike for a few weeks and left me with sciatica for around three months afterwards. Luckily I have a great physiotherapist and I've been fine this year.

What's your ratio of indoor to outdoor miles? 100 per cent outdoors. I sold my turbo trainer. I hated the pain cave.

What's your main target for this year? I have a few events lined up but my main goal is to hit 20,000 miles by the end of the year.

Are you doing more or less riding than this time last year?

I'm doing slightly more.

Confidence, out of 10, of hitting 5,000 miles this year? 10

Photos Chris Catchpole

March Challenges sponsored by

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OPINION



Switching to the road means leaving behind the camaraderie of the track

OWAIN DOULL



Why, at this time, I miss the track

With the Track World Championships over for another year, it's only fitting I touch on it for this month's column.

This was the last stop on the road to Tokyo; if you're not in the starting line-up your chances of going to the Olympics drop dramatically.

At this stage a good team needs to be settled and working in harmony – you don't want to get to August and still be chopping and changing riders and orders. You want to lay down a marker and show you are still in the hunt for Tokyo.

Outside of the Games this is the only period of the year when I truly miss being

on the track. Lining up alongside your friends at the start of a team pursuit is something special. The training that you have to go through to get to this place binds you together.

Whether that's the 8am gym sessions or the eight-hour rides in Tenerife, it's impossible not to form a bond; any great team is only as good as its weakest rider. Be it in training or racing, you push and protect each other to ensure you're in the best place possible come the crunch. You've been through it together for this one moment in a year; it's your chance to take on the world.

But then, in less than four minutes it's done and back to training you go.

I have the utmost respect for the track riders who continue Olympic cycle after Olympic cycle. The monotony of lap after lap was something I couldn't commit to for another four years, which is why I decided to step away to the road.

Ed Clancy has always been someone I've admired. As the demands of the team pursuit change, Ed evolves with it and his hunger to win remains. Regardless of the results from the Worlds, I'm confident the GB men and women will make those laps count come Tokyo and I will be sat watching and wishing I was on that start line ready to take on the world with them.

Owain Doull rides for Team Ineos

HANNAH DINES



TO THOSE WHO HAVE KEPT ME GOING

I wrote this for myself after my UK Sport funding stopped in 2017; I thought it might help motivate you if you're forgoing road riding in the cold snap. I called it Reasons to Ride:

Because I came home from my first cycling World Cup and was going to pretend like nothing had happened and cram all the science lectures I had missed, except my flatmates had turned the kitchen into a giant gold medal.

Because of that time when I saw my first ever disabled trike racer. I was used to sticking out like a, well, a third wheel, and suddenly I knew I had found my place.

Because a friend's dad, who knew my parents weren't spectating, stared into my eyes and said "fly" because he knew I could.

Because of every time Steve, the gossip-king of my local ride club, came out in the cold to do insane rides with me even though I was always grumpy because I was training so hard and fatigue is like that.

Because of the taxi driver who I thought was going to beep at me when he saw me out training in a mid-February storm, and who instead shouted over the wail and slap of sleet as I shivered at a red light: "Scuse me, just wanted to say you're the bravest person I know."

Hannah Dines is a Paralympian track rider

MARC ETCHES



IN PRAISE OF WINTER

As usual it has been a busy start to the year, mainly taken up by planning for another busy season ahead. Throughout the year I somehow manage to juggle organising events, commissaire around the country on National events, attend British Cycling Yorkshire board meetings, coordinate the White Rose

Youth League, attend British Cycling Road Commission meetings and keep Sheffrec Cycling Club ticking over

— so I'm never twiddling my thumbs. Big events for me in 2020 are the Magnificent 7 in March, Sheffield Grand Prix in July, and in October the HMT Monsal Hill-Climb, for which I've got something special up my sleeve to celebrate 90 years.

So, unusually for a cyclist, the winter season is my favourite time of the year as I get to ride my bike and enjoy the Peak District. The wind, rain and sometimes freezing conditions very much make for those 'character-building' rides. Although, after over 30 years of riding in the Peak District, I think I've well and truly built my character. The satisfaction of beating the elements is always a great reminder of why cycling is so good for mentally recharging the batteries for the next job on my to-do list.

Marc Etches is vice chairman of BC Yorkshire and event organiser

**"I've got
plans for the
90th Monsal
Hill-Climb"**



TWEET OF THE WEEK



Alex Dowsett

Got a feeling the hotel gym's exercise bike is going to get more use in 24hrs than it's had in its entire lifetime.

@alex Dowsett,
from quarantine at
the UAE Tour

THE HUB

All the news you might have missed from the last seven days



Asgreen proved too strong for a baying peloton

Asgreen unstoppable at Kuurne

Kasper Asgreen (Deceuninck-Quick Step) put in an unstoppable ride at the Kuurne-Brussels-Kuurne semi-Classic, soloing to victory at the end of a hard race in Belgium.

Dane Asgreen spent most of the day working for his team, before launching his move with around 20km to ride. The 25-year-old bridged across to the fading breakaway, riding them off his wheel in the final kilometres to cross the line with the bunch snapping at his heels just three seconds behind.



Tinkov is fighting a tax fraud case

Police bust Spanish dope ring

Spanish police have dismantled a suspected doping wholesaler who was in possession of more than 1.65 million doses of performance-enhancing drugs.

Catalonia police arrested seven people on suspicion of drug trafficking and forgery.

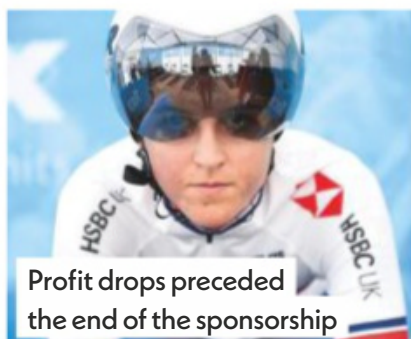
The wholesaler allegedly distributed the drugs using agents who took deliveries at their homes before passing them on. Thirteen mobile phones and €13,000 in cash was seized from the home of the organisation's leader, and at the home of one agent, 84,000 tablets and 2,500 bottles of oral and injectable PEDs were found. Evidence of counterfeiting doping drugs was also discovered.

UCI opens sex assault inquiries

The UCI's Ethics Commission has opened investigations into sexual impropriety allegations made against a staffer at Belgian team Doltcini-Van Eyck Sport. Two former riders at the second division women's team — 24-year-old American Sara Youmans and 21-year-old Canadian Maggie Coles-Lyster — have come forward with allegations published by French outlet *Le Monde*. One dates back to 2017 when the team was called Lares-Waowdeals. The team has yet to make a statement.

HSBC to end BC backing

HSBC is to bring to an end its multi-million pound sponsorship of British Cycling. The bank has sponsored the national governing body since January 2017. Earlier this month, HSBC announced it would cut around 35,000 jobs as it announced profits dropped by around a third last year. BC CEO Julie Harrington, said: "We will part with HSBC UK as firm friends and look forward to working with them to support our riders to achieve their best in Tokyo."



Profit drops preceded the end of the sponsorship

£20m

the bail sum Tinkoff-Saxo owner Oleg Tinkov

had to surrender last week, as he fights extradition to the US for alleged tax fraud. The 52-year-old appeared in Westminster Magistrates Court after a provisional warrant for his arrest was issued. The Russian is accused of under-reporting his income in 2013. Tinkov said his legal team was "working to resolve this issue as soon as possible".

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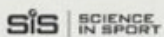
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19 Apr	New Forest Spring	Hampshire
3 May	Surrey Cyclone	Surrey
16 May	Jurassic Beast	Dorset
30 May	Ride Cotswolds	Gloucestershire
13 Jun	Vale Velo	North Yorkshire
28 Jun	Peaks Tour	Derbyshire
12 Jul	Mendips Sportive	Somerset
25 Jul	Malvern Mad Hatter	Worcestershire
9 Aug	Ride Yorkshire	North Yorkshire
5 Sep	Sussex Downs Classic	Sussex
19 Sep	New Forest 100	Hampshire
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The best thing about the Spring Classics is...

■ Unsympathetically chuckling to myself watching the participants in the Tour of Flanders sportive last year trying to 'walk' up the cobbled climbs with road cleats on their shoes! *Clive Tricker*

■ Watching the pros suffer on the pavé while comfortably recovering on the couch from a 100km ride through rain, hail, sleet and snow in the morning. *Michael Mueller*

■ Trying to convince your better half that you need a cobble-specific bike to go and try out the pavé. *Jon Elliott*

■ Getting over and watching them. There is no better place in the world than West Flanders in springtime. *Brett Jones*

■ Making your own Belgian ambiance in the comfort of your living room with litres of Tripel beer, cheese, cold meat, techno music and setting off a flare for added effect. *Lawrence Brown*

■ The sheer brutality of the racing. *Andy McLare*

■ It's the spring... and winter is finally over! *Andy Miller*

■ Not leaving the sofa for eight hours (apart from comfort breaks and answering the front door to the Deliveroo man. *Tracey Milne*

■ They are so unpredictable when it comes

to who is going to win. Also nice to see races that are not controlled by particular teams. *Phil Thomas*

■ The racing. Best road racing of the year. *David Gray*

■ You've made it through another winter. *Martin Hughes*

NEXT WEEK'S BIG QUESTION...

Now we've had a few races and seen all the teams, tell us what your favourite 2020 pro team kit is.

Reply to us at cycling@ti-media.com or at www.facebook.com/CyclingWeekly

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UAE Tour: first race to fall victim to Covid-19 but perhaps not the last

UAE Tour abandoned due to coronavirus outbreak

I was reading Geraint Thomas's book (or watching documentary, I forget which) and he was saying pro cyclists never shake hands (they bump elbows) due to the risk of catching a bug before/during a tour. *Jim Dennison*

The way it's spreading, a lot of the racing's going to get cancelled this season. *Michael Smith*

Shame — however, the riders' health or risk to their health must come first... ride another day... *Simon Fox*

Ironic because the number of spectators that actually attend the race can just about be counted on two hands. *Chris Smith*

Anyone who has exercise-induced asthma is at greater risk, that's just a fact. The worry,

however, is the top races like the Giro, TdF, etc. being cancelled *John Russell*

That's all Froome needs! Bad news for all. *Julian Cresswell*

This could impact their whole season. Praying that it's contained. *Es Hamman*

I wonder how the team's lawyers will react if riders have to be isolated in a hotel in Dubai for two weeks. Do they have turbos with them? Does 'loss of trade' hold any water as an argument? *Laura Bennet*

Milan-San Remo seems doomed this year. First it was the Poggio having to be repaired, now this. Hope they get a lid on all of this soon — imagine the Giro or the Tour being cancelled! *Pete Simmons*

Will Froome ride the Tour?

In the February 20 issue of *Cycling Weekly* you discuss whether or not Chris Froome can win a fifth Tour de France. A superstar he may be but is it certain that he will be selected for this year's race? Dave Brailsford has demonstrated ruthlessness in selection in the past. The sponsor, too, is ruthless. I do not doubt if either or both men felt the brand stood a better chance of winning with a younger rider that they would drop Froome. Nor do I think that they would employ him as a plan B or even C in case Froome decided to attack the designated leader(s).

Froome cannot afford to be a good team-mate this year: time is running out on his chances of a fifth victory. I am surprised that he did not seek another team to ensure he would ride and that he would be the undisputed leader.

C Beagrie, Galashiels

Ed — Regardless of selection issues, Chris Froome was under contract to Ineos until the end of 2020 so couldn't have switched teams. And with his injuries he wasn't in a position to go to another team and demand Tour leadership status. The team has supported him throughout so I doubt leaving has even crossed his mind.

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FEATURE

THE GENER

A new crop of young British stars is poised to burst upon the scene

NEXT NATION

the world stage; *Chris Marshall-Bell* profiles its leading lights



tuart Blunt has been coaching Britain's next generation of cyclists for almost 20 years.

He has seen the likes of Mark Cavendish, Geraint Thomas, Owain Doull and latterly Tom Pidcock become some of the best riders in the world.

So when he offers his assessment on the group of riders currently aiming to emulate those who have made the country a cycling powerhouse this century, it's wise to listen. And his words are exciting.

"I've been with BC for 18 years and this is the best group of juniors we have ever had," he tells CW.

"We have had good individuals since Cav and Geraint but never a group like this. It's a real golden era."

Charlie Quarterman, Fred Wright, Ethan Hayter, Elynor Bäckstedt and Anna Henderson have all stepped up to WorldTour teams this season, while Jake Stewart and Lewis Askey are racing for FDJ-Groupama's development team, Matt Walls for the British Cycling Academy, and Simon Carr for Nippo-Delko One Provence.

Blunt continues: "We are in a four-to-five year cycle of a real golden group of athletes. Cav winning the 2011 Worlds road race with riders who he was on the [British Cycling] Academy with was a great story, but this current group will beat that. They'll be the next world champions."

"When we take them to Junior Nations Cup races we have agents

and team managers hanging around wanting to collar the lads. Young British cyclists have got a reputation and everyone wants them.

"We have a group of kids who all believe that they can do it because they are so talented."

Those riders have a number of appealing avenues to obtain their goals, whether by continuing with the national governing body, signing for a UCI team home or abroad, or trying their own luck with an amateur team in mainland Europe.

When together and competing under the Union flag, the collective strength in depth has been a key role in the development of the riders.

"They have all had their moment, their time taking the limelight, so they have also all had their time in the background. Having mates around who can take the pressure off means they are able to help one another," Blunt says.

"I feel privileged to come into work with these juniors because my job is easy. I stick them on a bike, point them in the right direction, and they figure it out themselves."

Mark Donovan

**CUMBRIA, 20, TEAM
SUNWEB, GC**

Britain has a cluster of emerging general classification riders, and Mark Donovan has slotted straight into that group.

"There's Tao Geoghegan-Hart and James Knox who you would say can do well, but Mark is top of the pile in terms of raw talent," Simon Cope, former manager at Donovan's previous team Team Wiggins, says. "He has a lot of natural talent. From what I have seen from him, he can do some damage."

The ascendancy of the Cumbrian ex-fell runner started in 2018 when he finished fourth at the Baby Giro and sixth at the Volta as Alentejo.

He had ambitions on winning the U23 Italian race last summer, but illness hampered him. Still he impressed enough to earn a contract with Sunweb aged just 20.

A climber with a punchy acceleration – though he prefers



longer climbs – he also has other necessary skills to impress in stage races, whether spanning a few days or three weeks. “He can go down hills pretty well, he has speed and can turn in a half-decent time trial, too,” Cope continued. “I think when he matures, three-week stage races will suit him.”

Donovan trains hard but races harder. “He just loves going out and racing his bike. Sometimes you’d tell him to save his pennies and not to attack, but then he does. You think, ‘for goodness sake, Mark’, but then it works out. He’s not worried about what numbers he can produce because he races purely on feel. He gets on with his job and nothing seems to bother him.”

Gabriel Cullaigh

**YORKSHIRE, 23,
MOVISTAR, SPRINTER**

Gabz Cullaigh has been on the periphery of the WorldTour for many years, finally reaching cycling’s top tier this season by signing with Movistar.

A former rider on British Cycling’s Senior Academy, Cullaigh has also spent timing racing for SEG and Team Wiggins, notably taking three stage wins in the Volta as Alentejo and Rutland-Melton CiCLE Classic.

A well-built, muscular sprinter – an appearance not so dissimilar to Marcel Kittel minus the blonde hair – Cullaigh dreams of taking wins in the Tour of Flanders and Paris-Roubaix. “They are incredible tests of the human body,” he told this magazine two years ago. “They take more than just being strong: they require race craft.”

“He has speed and power; he’s a strong guy,” Cope tells CW. “He’s not got pure speed, but he’s got strength speed. He’s better at slightly uphill finishes, draggy ones, rather than real flat and fast.”

He is a focused individual; the sort of articulate, concentrated bike rider so absorbed by his desires that he meticulously studies each parcours.



Joining Movistar was a WorldTour dream come true for Cullaigh

“He is the sort of bike rider so absorbed by his desires that he meticulously studies each parcours”

If there is a problem, he will fix it. “He will speak up in team meetings if he thinks a rider is not pulling his weight,” Cope reveals.

There was also the time he relocated to Yorkshire because he knew mentally he was better for it. “He is laid-back but he knows what he wants. He has got commitment,” Cope adds.

Professional victories will come, Cope believes. “There’s something there, without a doubt, and I expect good results from him.”

Ben Tulett

YORKSHIRE, 18, ALPECIN-FENIX, ALL-ROUNDER

Ben Tulett’s name features regularly on these pages. A two-time junior cyclo-cross world champion, the 18-year-old Yorkshireman has seemingly traced Tom Pidcock’s wheel tracks in the past few years.

Wins in the junior editions of National Trophy rounds,

Koppenbergcross, the National Championships, and podiums in World Cup and Telenet Superprestige races prompted Team Alpecin-Fenix to sign him to ride alongside Mathieu van der Poel.

In the ensuing cross seasons he is expected to be a leading figure in the U23 ranks. “He can be one of the best at U23 level, for sure,” Dean Downing, who coached him for three years, told CW. “And in a couple of years he can also be in that conversation if he steps up to elite.”

Downing describes Tulett as shy, but added: “When he gets on the bike he is like an assassin. He is super-confident but he knows what he can and can’t do; he pushes himself to the limit.

“As a junior, his power-to-weight ratio was phenomenal, and he has put some good muscle on now so that’s even better.”

Typically, cross riders morph into Classics riders – but Tulett could buck that trend. “I’ve known Ben since he was five years old and he’s always wanted to be a Grand Tour rider,” Downing reveals.

“He’s got a very good one-to-five-minute power and he is a very good climber because he is both powerful and light.

Leo Hayter

LONDON, 18, TEAM SUNWEB, ALL-ROUNDER



The young Hayter is a promising stage racer

Younger brother of Ethan, Leo Hayter is carving out a slightly different career path to the Olympic-bound Team Ineos rider.

Although he has had success on the track – being part of the foursome who became European junior team pursuit champions last summer



Tulett’s high power-to-weight ratio puts Grand Tours within his grasp

“When he gets on the bike he is like an assassin. He is super-confident”

with a time of 4.01 – his future appears to lay entirely on the road, taking a big step forward this season riding for Team Sunweb’s development team.

“He is a very strong time triallist and climbs really well so he will be a stage racer, I think,” Stuart Blunt, British Cycling coach, says. “He is the all-round package and there is a lot to come from him.”

Don’t discard his chances in a sprint, too. “He’s deceptively fast at the end of hard races and he won a few sprints last year from small groups,” Blunt reveals.

Rory McGuire

SCOTLAND, 17, BRITISH CYCLING JUNIOR ACADEMY

In just his first year racing as a junior, the Scotsman became junior national cyclo-cross champion – no surprise



McGuire shines in the mud

considering his three wins in the National Trophy.

Away from home he has impressed, too, finishing in the top-10 in four consecutive races in Belgium, and then recording a ninth-place finish in the Junior World Championships.

He has also shown promise in mountain biking, but on the road he has yet to prove himself.

BREATHE EASY WITH NAROO

Banish hay fever and filter out pollution with a scientifically constructed sport mask

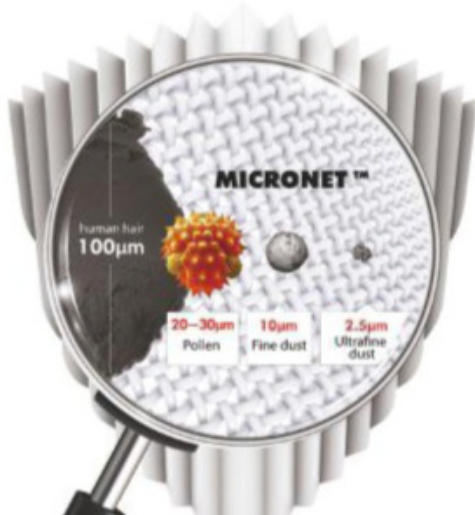
After months of riding in the cold and dark, the spring equinox is a welcome seasonal change for cyclists. Unfortunately, the joys of spring and warmer weather can be overshadowed by the symptoms of hay fever and a reduction in air quality.

While hay fever affects some people, ambient air pollution affects us all, and is now the top UK environmental risk to human health, and the fourth greatest threat to public health after cancer, heart disease and obesity.*

But seasonal and perennial breathing issues don't have to turn your ride into an uphill struggle. While the best way to avoid inhaling airborne pollen particles is to avoid going outside entirely, this is hardly a practical solution for cyclists with a passion for life outdoors.

While there are some remedies

MICRONET fabric traps pollen and dust



NAROO Mask filters out pollen and dust so you can focus on cycling

available for pollen allergy prevention, the only real solution for protection against all airborne particles is to cover your airways with a mask.

NAROO sports masks are streamlined, easy to fit and have been specifically designed to enable optimal breathing during intense sports activities.

The filtering system uses the exclusive MICRONET fabric, which filters out the smallest classified particle matter, PM2.5 – 200 times smaller than a grain of sand.

MICRONET fabric exclusive to NAROO, certified by BOKEN, completely blocks pollen particles, enabling sports people to fully enjoy the outdoors. The washable and reusable filtration system acts as a barrier to harmful particles, not your ability to breathe – vital when pressing on means breathing hard.

Seasonal breathing: it doesn't have to be an uphill struggle.

naroomask.com

*DEFRA Clean Air Strategy 2019

Stay informed about air quality where you ride

Met Office

Search and save place names for 10-day weather, UV, air pollution and pollen counts. Visit www.metoffice.gov.uk or download the free app.

DEFRA

Provides advanced forecasts warnings of expected air pollution levels for the UK and allows you to search maps by postcode. Either visit uk-air.defra.gov.uk, follow UK-AIR on Twitter or sign up to email bulletins.

London Air

Independent forecasts on air pollution for London and SE England. Visit www.londonair.org.uk or download the free London Air app.

Oscar Nilsson-Julien

LONDON, 18, BRITISH CYCLING JUNIOR ACADEMY

Entering his second year as a junior, word within British Cycling is that they may have unearthed a future star.

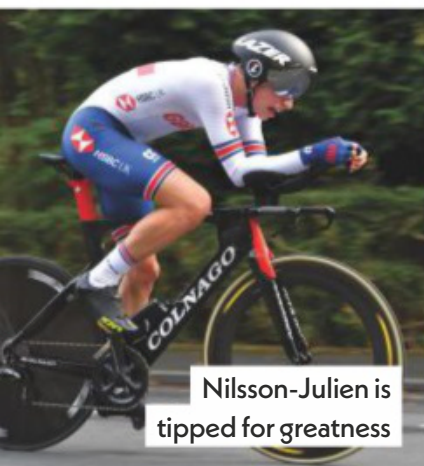
Wins in the Junior Tour of Wales, Cadence Road Race, and a second place at the Junior Isle of Man Tour are his road highlights, but on the boards of the track he has repeatedly demonstrated his capabilities in almost every discipline.

"You don't want to put a big name on him, but he's got an aura of Geraint

Thomas about him. He's super-strong on the track, climbs well and will be a good stage racer," Blunt assesses.

"He has an element of arrogance about him,

an edge, but in a good way. He knows where he wants to go and he has the ability to manage that – sometimes you need that to be world class."



Nilsson-Julien is tipped for greatness

Smith's a gifted climber and sprinter



"I am more of a road rider and, hopefully, I'd like to have a career on a pro team"

Abi Smith

YORKSHIRE, 17, BRITISH CYCLING JUNIOR ACADEMY

A former triathlete who only took up road racing 18 months ago, the Yorkshire teenager prefers climbing, winning two stages en route to success in the North West Tour last August and the Junior National Road Series. She is also a capable sprinter, too, currently holding the title of national circuit champion and podiuming in other criteriums.

Like almost all riders her age and

involved in the British Cycling set-up, Smith is adept in the velodrome, but she knows where her future lays. She told the *Yorkshire Post*: "I am more of a road rider and, hopefully, I'd like to have a career on a professional team in the future. That would be ideal."

seems to always be in contention for victory. In January she became points and team pursuit national champion, adding to a palmarès that already includes being Scottish junior national road champion and winner of Arctic Heroes of Tomorrow. Nineteen in May,

Anna Shackley

SCOTLAND, 18, BRITISH CYCLING SENIOR ACADEMY

Track or road, it doesn't seem to matter what the young Scot does, she



Shackley shines both on road and track



Watson's impressive junior career bodes well for the future

she also has success in stage races both at home and abroad, including finishing third at the Watersley Ladies Challenge in the Netherlands.

Sam Watson

YORKSHIRE, 18, BRITISH CYCLING JUNIOR ACADEMY

As a junior, Watson was one of the most feared riders on both the domestic and international circuits. Wins at home in the Tour of Wales and Junior CiCLE Classic followed his victory in the Belgian Guido Reybrouck Classic and he also finished third at the junior Ghent-Wevelgem.

Blunt is excited by the European team pursuit champion: "He is a big lad, strong. He is slight up top but has strong legs. He gets around hard races well and positions himself in the right places.

"He is a great prospect. He will really quickly become comfortable in U23 Nations Cup races like Tour l'Avenir and I think a lot of big teams will become interested early on.

"He's competent on the track, but he will be a future WorldTour rider. He will be great in grippy one-day races."

FOREIGN PROSPECTS

Away from the British Isles, riders destined for success are appearing around Europe and the Americas, with more and more athletes in the infancy of their careers putting in performances that belie their tender years. Here are five that CW are excited about.



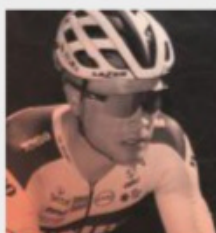
Quinn Simmons, 18, USA, Trek-Segafredo:

The youngest rider in the WorldTour – the American turns 19 in May. A former mountain biker who only raced on the road for the first time in March 2018, he was in dominant form last year, winning no less than 11 races across the spring and summer. Then, at the Yorkshire-held World Championships, he attacked with 33km to go to take the junior rainbow jersey.



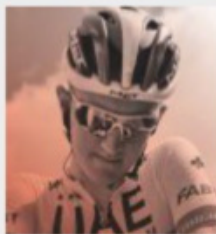
Andrea Bagioli, 19, Italy, Deceuninck-Quick Step:

The Belgian team have acquired one of the most exciting climbers who is as adept at one-day races as he is at stage races. Wins at the Baby Il Lombardia and GP Industria last year went alongside a GC victory at Ronde de l'Isard, and a stage win at Giro Valle d'Aosta Mont Blanc.



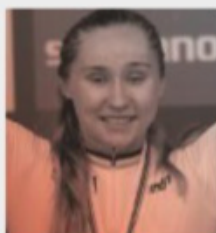
Tobias Foss, 22, Norway, Jumbo-Visma:

His apprenticeship in the U23 ranks has brought Foss a wealth of success. General classification success at the 2019 Tour de l'Avenir and further top-five finishes in stage races point to a future in the mountains, but he is also a comfortable time triallist and one-day rider, even in northern Europe.



Mikkil Bjerg, 21, Denmark, UAE-Team Emirates:

The last three U23 time trial World Championships have all been won by the Dane, with the Copenhagen-born rider frequently scoring success against the clock in the past few years. His prowess in this area has aided his chances in stage races, too, as illustrated by his victory at Le Triptyque des Monts et Châteaux last season.



Megan Jastrab, 18, USA, Rally Cycling:

The American junior national champion only raced seven days in Europe last year, but won a one-day race in Italy, two stages and the GC at the Healthy Ageing Tour in Netherlands, and the junior World Championships. Her other performances? Second at Ghent-Wevelgem and ninth in the Worlds time trial. An incredible talent who appears to be suited to flatter races and sprints.

World Hour record attempt Milan, 1960

Beryl Burton embarks on a World Hour record attempt at the Vigorelli Velodrome in Milan, in 1960. Among others in the picture, she is flanked by multiple world sprint champion Reg Harris (second left), who at that point had retired from racing and would make a comeback 11 years later.

The Vigorelli Velodrome was *the* venue for World Hour record attempts at the time. The current women's record holder at the time, Elsy Jacobs of Luxembourg, had set her record of 41.347km at the same track, as had men's holder Roger Rivière (47.347km). In fact the previous nine men's records had been set there.

However, Burton's attempt exposed the track's incompatibility with the event, with bad weather blighting her ride. Jacobs's record stood.



Photo Cycling Weekly archive



How do you choose the perfect rim depth for you?

Michelle Arthurs-Brennan delves into the science behind selecting the right wheel

If money were no object, we'd be able to swap wheelsets depending on the terrain, weather conditions and type of riding we intended to do. But most of us cannot afford to buy a lightweight set for mountain rides, deep-sections for flat time trials as well as something with an everlasting, perfectly sealed hub for the winter. So, assuming we're limited to just one wheelset, the question is: how deep should the rim be?

Aero over weight?

The consensus is that gains from aerodynamic efficiency override the benefits of weight saving in all but the most mountainous of scenarios. Dov Tate, founder of British wheel brand Parours, says: "If you run the numbers, you literally have to climb Alpe d'Huez or equivalent before weight becomes a more important issue."

The good news is that the capabilities of modern wheels mean that the weight penalty is often minor, anyway.

"These days, wheels are much more flexible in terms of use. The higher-end wheels are getting lighter and lighter, and the aero benefit you get from deeper wheels is almost always going to outweigh any weight penalty," Tate adds.

Looking within the Parours range, for example, the 77mm front/86mm rear Chrono set weighs in at 1,625g versus the 40mm Grimpour at 1,320g — a difference of 305g. For reference, the full 500ml bidon sitting on my desk right now weighs 576g, and I wouldn't attempt my two-hour lunch time ride without it.

All of this said, it's important to know that the biggest jump in performance comes in the move from a box-section rim to a 30mm-40mm wheel with an aero profile; adding more depth is marginal gains territory.

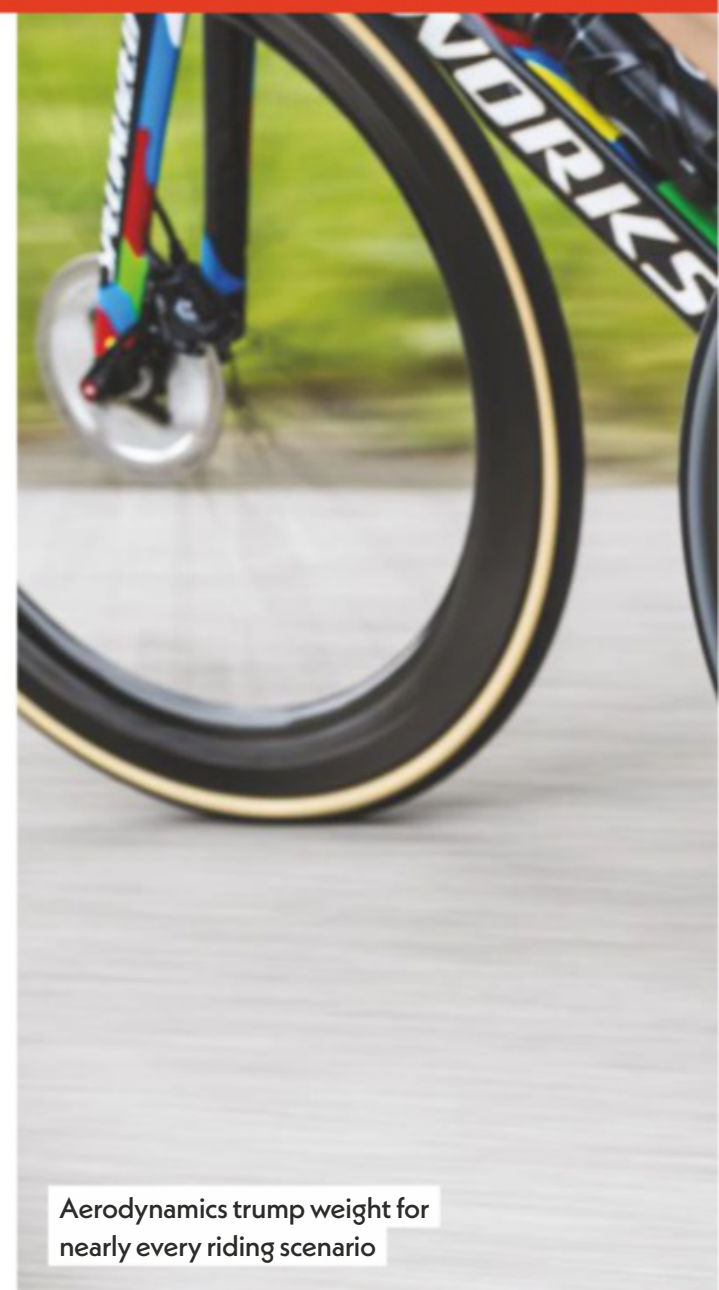
Tate has run the numbers. Comparing a Parours Grimpour 40mm wheelset with a popular box-section wheel (standard, alloy non-optimised rim), he discovered a 22.9 watt saving. Moving to the Chrono 77mm front/86mm rear pair, the saving was 29.7W — that's a 6.7W difference.

"A modern [well designed] 40mm wheelset will have an optimised rim profile, so even though you're losing out on the depth, you'd still see a benefit in a time trial or solo effort, when compared with a box-section rim," he says.

Additional research carried out by cycling coach James Spragg of Spragg Cycle Coaching found a difference of 3W when comparing a rider on a Specialized Venge with Roval CLX 64mm wheels versus Roval CLX 32mm wheels, when riding at 40kph and with yaw angles between zero and five degrees.

Aero lead and senior R&D engineer at Specialized Mio Suzuki agrees that a lot of the initial savings come from the jump between a traditional box-section rim and the deeper 30mm-40mm group.

"For most people, the ideal choice is a mid-section wheel"



Aerodynamics trump weight for nearly every riding scenario

"I think one of the important aspects of choosing a deeper rim is how the rim shape is designed," he says. "The sidewall curvature shape contributes a lot to both drag and side force. So deeper is not necessarily better."

However, he still believes that there's merit in going deeper for those chasing speed. Commenting on the data collected by

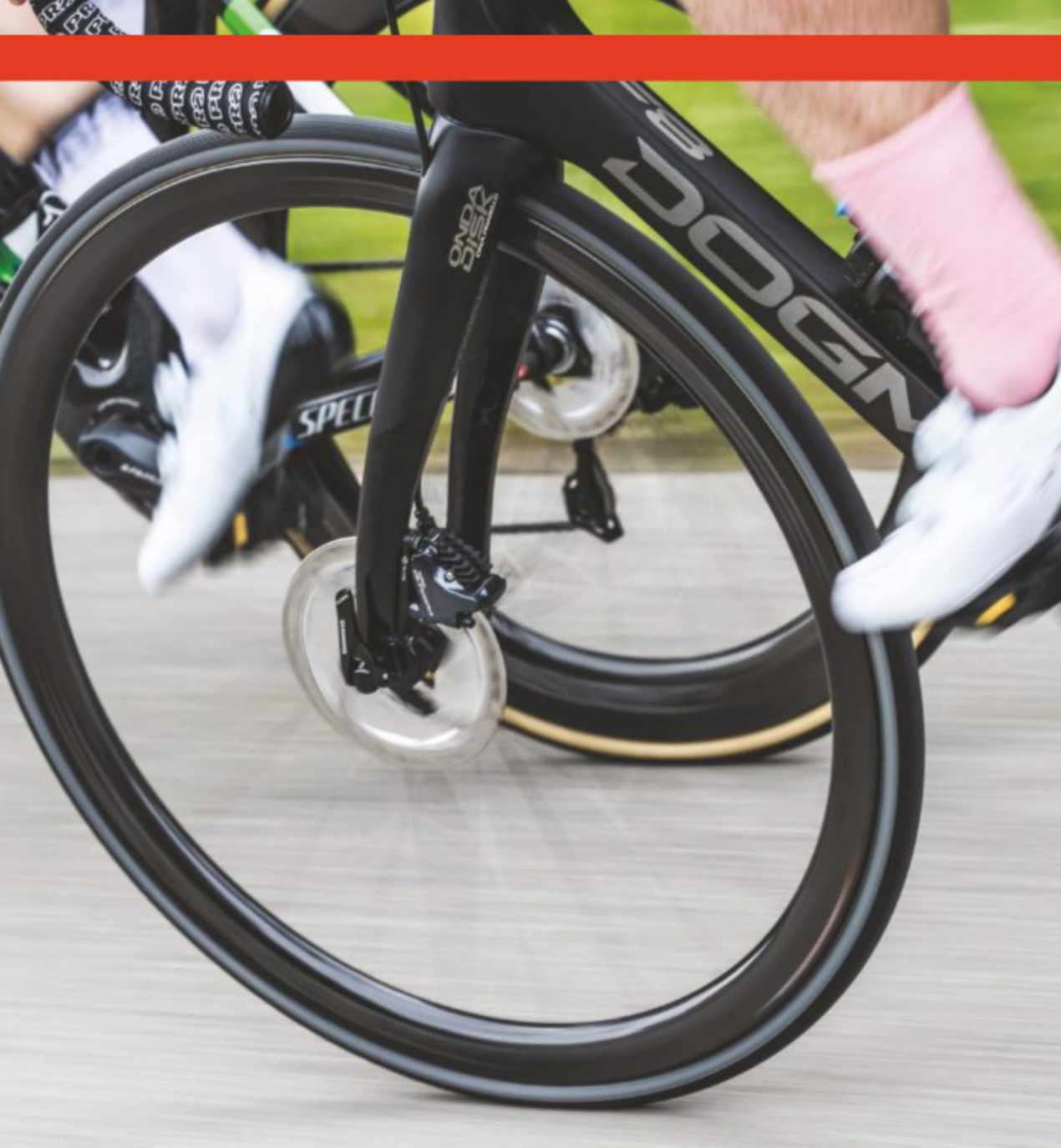
Spragg, Suzuki says:

"At that particular riding speed of 40kph, and at those yaw angles [zero and five degrees], the numbers we have from our wind tunnel also demonstrate a similar range of wattage gains."

Yaw angle is the degree to which drag deviates from forward motion. Pro riders sitting in a peloton and moving very

fast will experience a low yaw angle; a solo rider battling crosswinds at 25kph will experience high yaw angles.

"We have computed yaw angle profiles for an entire 2017 Grand Tour stage. We found that yaw angles above five degrees matter,



and based on our internal numbers, the power difference keeps increasing to over 10W at higher yaw angles at 40kph.”

A saving of 10W could be huge, but only for a rider who has already optimised their position on the bike.

“There’s far more to be gained by optimising position – for example spending your money on wind tunnel time – than spending money on wheels. You contribute 85 per cent of the drag, so look at the big things first,” says Spragg.

Wind-tunnel testing at the Boardman Performance Centre starts at £195, for an Aero Experience including 30 minutes in the tunnel, rising to £695 for a complete Aero Fit.

Weight and control

The other part of the equation is control – there’s little point opting for an 80mm rim if you’re going to struggle to keep it in a straight line.

“As soon as you come out of your aero tuck on bars or drops, you’re giving up more aerodynamically than you gain from the depth of the rim. So it’s no good racing a super-deep front wheel if you can’t hold an

aero position with it,” Tate says. “A lighter rider is going to be more impacted by crosswinds when using a deep wheelset. It also comes down to the level of experience.”

Mid-sections for most

So compromise is the keyword when selecting a wheelset: “Choose wheels that are most tailored to what you do most of the time, with your riding style, level of experience and weight factored in,” Tate explains.

“For most people the ideal choice is a mid-section rim of 40-60mm. If you live in the mountains, a modern 40mm wheelset is the best option and will still offer an advantage even in a flat time trial.

“If you plan to focus on time trials, look for an 80mm rim – modern designs have greatly improved handling.”

Reassuringly, these conclusions are echoed by Suzuki: “My recommendation for race-focused consumers would be 40mm-50mm wheels. But, if a consumer is weight conscious, and doesn’t like the feel of handling the deeper-rim wheels, then 32mm is a good choice.”

HOT KIT

Canyon Ultimate CF £7,449

The Ultimate CF Evo is Canyon’s lightest ever frame, and the 2020 model has just landed. An improved carbon layup helps to reduce weight – a medium sized frame comes in at 641g, with a 285g fork. Stiffness hasn’t been sacrificed, and Canyon has used a combination of ultra high-modulus and ultra high-tension carbon-fibre to keep the balance.

More grams are saved with the likes of an integrated front derailleur mount and a lighter fork steerer. The 1.25in dimensions remain unchanged; maintaining stiffness at the front end and the direct handling we love.

Aesthetically, this bike is all about stealth, with minimal graphics.

The Ultimate is an all-rounder,



designed to perform in the mountains while still offering aero advantages such as a one-piece Canyon CP20 carbon-fibre cockpit. We’ve just received the 2020 Ultimate Evo, and our test model in size extra-small tipped the scales at 5.98kg.

The newest model is dressed in a SRAM Red eTap AXS HRD groupset, with DT Swiss PRC 1100 Dicut 12x100 hoops. A 25th anniversary special from the brand, the 24mm rims boast a weight of just 1,225 grams a pair.

To top it all off, Canyon has specced this machine with Schwalbe’s Pro One TT tan sidewall tyres. We’ll be taking it off to Dénia in Spain for some serious miles, so expect a full review soon.

■ www.canyon.com/en-gb

CORRECTION In last week’s feature ‘Breaking Drag’, the price listed for the Notio aerosensor was incorrect. The Notio retails for £950.

Cervélo R5 Disc SRAM eTap

AXS £8,399 | 6.91 kg

Michelle Arthurs-Brennan is impressed by a featherweight all-rounder

I'll always spend at the very least a few weeks putting a test bike through its paces, but the reality is that most opinions are formed in the opening miles. In the case of the Cervélo R5, I made up my mind on the first 15 per cent hairpin bend out of my home town: stiff, direct, but without sacrificing comfort.

My opinion hasn't changed after a few hundred miles of testing – though I have found a couple of bugbears along the way.

The 'R' denotes Cervélo's 'Classic Road' series and the R5 is designed as an all-rounder on stages where the aero credentials of the S5 will be overridden by the featheriness of the R5. And it is the kind of bike that elicits surprise when lifted – my size 51 came in at a slimline 6.91kg.

The most recent redesign of the Cervélo R5 was all about increasing stiffness, without tipping the balance into discomfort, and tweaking the geometry to provide a more aggressive – but still stable – ride.

The brand claims its new layup has boosted stiffness by 13 per cent at the bottom bracket and 21 per cent at the head tube. It was this increase in bottom bracket rigidity which blew me away on a winter's day in January.

Getting out of the saddle resulted in an immediate injection of pace.

Stiffness without compromise makes for an unyielding ride that skits over road imperfections and beats a rider into submission rather than raising them up to success. The Cervélo R5 was never guilty of this. While acceleration was punchy, the pockmarked lanes of winter club runs were smoothed out by its expert blend of carbon layup and skinny seatstays.

PROS & CONS



STIFF

LIGHT

COMPLIANT



LACKING AERO CREDENTIALS

LIGHT FRONT END

ADJUSTMENTS COULD BE COSTLY

My test model came specced with Continental GP 4000 II S tyres in 25mm – but there is clearance for 28mm should you wish to add a little more cushioning.

Handling is another area where the Canadian manufacturer boasts expertise. The wheelbase, at 974mm, is in line with similar GC-style bikes; coupled with a 72° head angle, increased trail in this iteration and the lowered bottom bracket, the features combine to create a bike which flicks into the corners willingly – and resulted in a PR on White Hill Lane, a descent I've attacked many a time and in

much better conditions.

One area which baffled me a little about the R5 was that while the back end felt responsive and the steering was bang on, I felt like my centre of gravity was further back than usual, creating a feeling of lightness at the front end, detracting slightly from the otherwise spot-on handling.

Checking the geometry charts, the numbers backed up my experience: a 73° seat tube angle has been applied across all sizes from 48-61cm. In a bike of this size, most brands will go steeper – around 74° – in the smaller models. One degree will make a difference of about 1cm at a 70cm saddle height, which rang true with my experience.

When I asked bike fitter Tim Allen, he confirmed my thoughts, commenting, "It's often that I can't get the saddle positioned far enough forward [on the R5], which



The R5's new carbon layup offers a taut, responsive ride without sacrificing comfort

SPECS

Frame Cervélo R5 All-Carbon with Pro Fit geometry **Fork** Cervélo All-Carbon, tapered R5 fork for disc **Stem** Cervélo carbon stem **Handlebar** Cervélo carbon AB06 **Groupset** SRAM Red eTap AXS HRD **Wheelset** DT Swiss PRC 1450 Spline 35 Disc, clincher **Tyres** Continental GP 4000 S II 25mm, clincher **Saddle** ASTUTE Skyline Lab **Seatpost** Cervélo carbon SP18 **Contact** www.cervelo.com

“Getting out of the saddle resulted in an immediate injection of pace”

SEATPOST

This model uses Cervélo's carbon SP18 seatpost – it comes with a 25mm layback though there's a zero offset version available

BAR AND STEM

The Canadian brand has used its own AB06 carbon handlebar with a matching carbon stem and an aero stem cap

25MM TYRES

Continental GP4000 II tyres have been specced; Continental has since released the updated GP5000 so these are a little out of date



FRAME

Cervélo's R5 frame comes in Pro Fit geometry and offers a direct, responsive ride with bucketloads of compliance



GROUPSET

The top-tier Cervélo R5 for 2020 features a full SRAM Red eTap AXS HRD groupset, with 12-speed shifting

MY RIDING



Michell Arthurs-Brennan:
tech editor I've been riding the Cervélo R5 throughout the winter months, while ramping up training ahead of the road racing season. I plan to tackle several rounds of the British Women's Team Cup, as well as a few HSBC

National Series races, so getting the miles in has been a big focus over winter. The R5 has provided an excellent training companion. There were a few minor gripes which meant I couldn't absolutely fall in love with it – but if I'm honest, thanks to the expert stiffness to compliance balance, I was pretty close!

SRAM Red eTap: top-tier disc brakes



either leads to light handling or riders shifting way too far forward on the saddle to accommodate getting over the top of the pedal stroke.”

Cervélo is far from the only brand to standardise seat angle, and it does offer the SP18 seatpost (£153) with a 25mm layback as well as a zero offset – I’d expect swapping for the latter to eliminate this issue, but potentially at a cost.

An engineer from its Canadian HQ told me: “Cervélo has always stuck to the 73° seat tube angle because there is no compelling reason not to. By providing both 0mm and 25mm offset seatposts combined with the adjustable range of current saddles, a majority of athletes can easily find the ‘right’ position for their needs without banging up against the edges of the range.”

Geometry tweaks

In days gone by, the Cervélo R5 had a bit of a reputation for being a race bike with a restrictively upright geometry, hence adjustments were made to the latest incarnation. The 51cm frame I had on test came with a stack/reach combo of 524/371mm, which puts it in the region of others in its class. I did slam the stem to achieve the ride quality I wanted, so those used to a very aggressive ride might need a negative angle.

My test model came fitted with Cervélo’s ABO6 aero carbon handlebar, which features ovalised tops that offer a flat surface to grasp on the climbs, plus the brand’s incredibly chunky carbon stem.

The bars on my model measure in at 40cm. This is wider than I’d like and it did negatively impact the ride for me when I wanted to get down low and feel aero. A consumer could ask for an exchange – but the bars do come in at £267 so it’s worth checking if your dealer will make a swap free of charge.

The stem features an ovalised aero top cap. If making adjustments, you’ll have to swap this for a standard round version until you’ve chopped the steerer. The aesthetic isn’t quite so attractive and the oval version also covers a small hole in the stem which

fills with water when you’re using a round top in the rain. You also do need to use Cervélo’s integrated computer mount as a standard model won’t sit straight on the bars.

The R5 has never had a particular focus on aerodynamics – that’s what the S series is for. You do get ‘Squoval Max’ tubing, which provides a square meets oval hybrid with a claimed more aerodynamic leading edge, but the seatstays remain traditionally high,

which sets this bike apart from the general trend where lightweight GC all-rounders are beginning to encroach on the design territory of aero machines (see the Specialized Tarmac/Venge battle

for evidence of this).

I spent my 2019 race season allowing an aero machine to gather dust because I just ‘felt right’ on my traditionally round-tubed old faithful. So a lack of aero optimisation really doesn’t bother me, but it might be a black mark for some riders.

This model boasts a SRAM Red eTap groupset, with 48-35 chainset plus a DT Swiss 35 disc carbon wheelset. The R5 uses Cervélo’s RAT thru-axle system – RAT standing for ‘Rapid Axle Technology’. This is effective enough, but I’d not call myself a fan – and though it might be rapid in the hands of mechanics using the system daily, personally I found the deviation from the norm made for much slower wheel changes.

Coming in at £8,399, quite obviously the Cervélo R5 is a very considered purchase. However, though you might be able to save if you look at direct-sales brands, the R5 sits in a similar bracket to comparable offerings.

VERDICT

8 The Cervélo R5 isn’t perfect: its lack of big aero credentials sees it fall behind other bikes in its class, and personally I would need to invest in a few tweaks to get the fit spot on. However, it’s easy to forget about these gripes when out on the road. The Canadian brand has created a stunning blend of stiffness with compliance which makes it a very capable race bike for those who want a true all-rounder.

ALTERNATIVELY...



ONE ACROSS

Cervélo S5



This is the top dog. So if you want more performance from Cervélo, you’re going to need to opt for an R5 and upgrade the wheelset to something deeper and more aero, or look to the S5 collection with its watt-saving profile, v-shaped front end and £10,199 price tag when dressed up with SRAM AXS eTap.



ONE DOWN

Cervélo R3



The Cervélo R family is made up of three steps: the R2, R3 and R5, with the latter being the most advanced frame. Drop down to the R3 and you’ll enjoy much of the performance with some minor adjustments, which cut the price. The disc R3 with Shimano Ultegra Di2 comes in at £5,099.

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FITNESS

20 WAYS TO

GET YOUR



20G PROTEIN HIT

We all know that protein builds muscle, but how many of us get the recommended five servings a day? Anita Bean steps in with 20 ways to hit your optimum daily intake

Getting enough protein in your diet is important for everyone – but especially for cyclists. Along with

helping you feel fuller for longer, this macronutrient helps build and repair your muscles, cartilage and ligaments after a tough workout. It also makes skin, bones, hair and lots of other tissues as well as enzymes, hormones and antibodies for your immune system. Although most of the energy used during exercise comes from carbohydrate and fat, protein also contributes to the fuel mixture, to the tune of two to five per cent – and even more if you're low on carbohydrate.

Even if you hit the recommended guidelines, you may not be getting enough protein to recover fully from your workouts. According to the International Society of Sports Nutrition, cyclists need more protein than the average person, and it recommends consuming between 1.4g and 2g of protein per kilogram a day. For a 70kg cyclist, this equates to 98-140g of protein per day – or at least five 20g servings (see below). This is needed to repair muscle fibres damaged during training and improve recovery as well as to build mitochondrial proteins, the powerhouses of the muscle cells that make energy.

How much protein you should consume per serving is a subject of debate by scientists. Most believe that around 0.25g of protein per kilo of body weight per serving is the optimal amount for building muscle mass – up to an absolute amount of 20g of protein per meal or snack. A serving greater than this won't give you any performance advantage, since muscle protein synthesis is maxed out around 20g of protein 'in one hit' – instead, it would be used for energy or

excreted in urine. As a rule of thumb, it's a good idea to consume 20g of protein ASAP after training and in each of your meals and snacks. Here are 20 ways to hit the 20g mark at breakfast, lunch and dinner, as well as in your snacks.

HIGH-PROTEIN INGREDIENTS

EGGS

There are between 5.2 and 7.5g of protein in an egg, depending on size. So if you whisk up two of them into a pan with 25g of crumbled feta cheese and a handful of spinach, you've got a tasty frittata with **20g protein**.

GREEK YOGURT

A 200g serving of plain Greek yogurt provides **20g protein**. Top it off with some strawberries – or fruit of your choice – and chopped nuts for some added sweetness and crunch.



FISH

A 120g fillet of haddock has 21g of protein, while a 100g of wild salmon has 22g. Put a fillet of fish in the middle of a 30cm square of foil. Season with salt and pepper, then add a handful each of sliced tomatoes, onion slices and red pepper strips. Drizzle with a little olive oil and a squeeze of lemon. Fold and seal the foil to make a parcel, place on a baking tray then bake at 180 degrees for 20 minutes.

Protein = 21g

EDAMAME BEANS

Edamame beans are young soya beans and, unlike most plant proteins, provide high levels of all nine essential amino acids your body needs. A 100g serving contains 13g of protein. Combine with half a packet (125g) of cooked quinoa, a handful of tenderstem broccoli, half a chopped avocado, a little olive oil and a squeeze of lemon. **Protein = 20g**

6 QUICK PROTEIN-RICH RECIPES

PERFORMANCE PORRIDGE

Cook 50g porridge oats with 300ml milk (dairy or soya) for four to five minutes. Top with a handful of berries, fresh or frozen, and one tablespoon of almond butter. **Protein = 21g**

BLACK BEAN AND ROASTED VEGETABLE LUNCHBOX

Toss a diced sweet potato with a shallot (quartered), a few chunks of red pepper and courgette and enough olive oil to coat, scatter over some dried Italian herbs, salt and black pepper and roast in a 200°C oven for 25 minutes. Combine with half a tin of black beans (drained), a handful of cherry tomatoes, a squeeze of lime and 25g crumbled goat's cheese or tofu. **Protein = 20g**

HALLOUMI RAINBOW SKEWERS

Cut 50g halloumi into 2.5cm cubes and thread on to two bamboo skewers with

FITNESS

wedges of onion, red and yellow peppers, courgette slices and button mushrooms. Brush with olive oil and one tablespoon of sesame seeds, and cook on a hot griddle pan or barbecue on a medium heat for five minutes each side. **Protein = 20g**



Avocado and cottage cheese on toast:
delectable muscle-building food

EASY STEAK FAJITAS

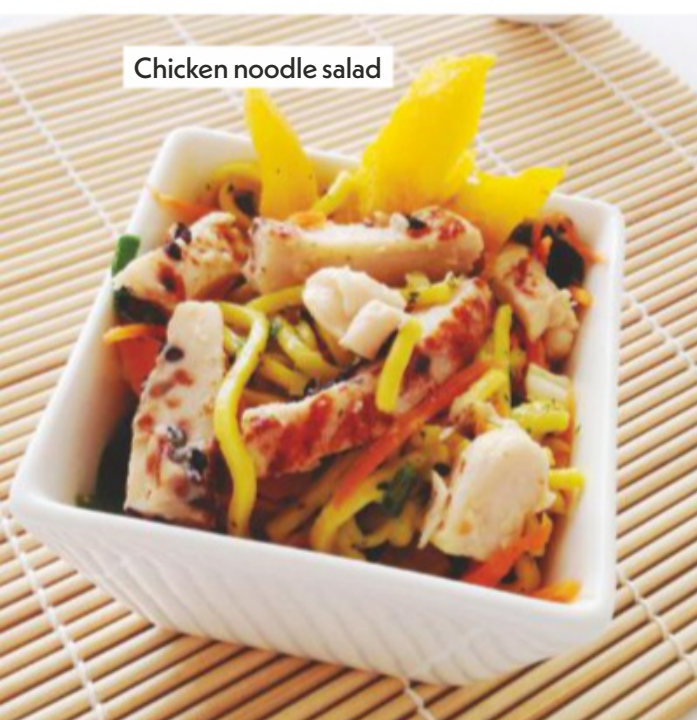
Rub 75g sirloin steak (cut into thin strips) with one teaspoon cajun seasoning; then fry in a hot pan over a medium heat for two to three minutes. Add a finely sliced onion and red pepper and cook for a further two minutes. Warm a tortilla in the oven, then fill with the steak mixture and top with salsa, guacamole, lettuce and soured cream. **Protein = 23g**

CHICKEN NOODLE SALAD

Combine 150g cooked rice noodles with one tablespoon sweet chilli sauce, 75g sliced cooked chicken breast, a handful of halved cherry tomatoes, a handful of sugar snap peas and (fresh or frozen) and a squeeze of lime. **Protein = 23g**

STRAWBERRY CHIA POTS

Put 25g chia seeds, one tablespoon maple syrup or honey, one-quarter teaspoon vanilla extract, 60ml milk and 75g plain Greek yogurt in a jar with a lid. Put the lid on, shake together and leave in the fridge overnight to set. In the morning top with some chopped strawberries and one tablespoon flaked almonds. **Protein = 20g**



Chicken noodle salad

6 HIGH-PROTEIN SNACKS

BERRY AND YOGURT SHAKE

Place a handful of frozen berries, 200ml milk, three tablespoons plain Greek yogurt and one heaped teaspoon almond butter in a blender and blitz until smooth. **Protein = 21g**

ROASTED CHICKPEAS

Toss one tin (400g) drained chickpeas with one tablespoon olive oil, two teaspoons curry powder, salt and pepper, spread out on a baking tray and roast at 190°C for 20-25 minutes, giving the tray a shake halfway through, until crispy. **Protein = 20g**

AVOCADO TOAST WITH COTTAGE CHEESE

Toast two slices of wholegrain or rye bread and top each one with one tablespoon (40g) plain cottage cheese, a quarter of an avocado and one teaspoon chia seeds. **Protein = 20g**

SIS WHEY 20 (£27.50 FOR 12)

With a texture more akin to yogurt than energy gels, this dairy-based protein gel gives you 20g of protein including 6g branched-chain amino acids – which may help reduce muscle breakdown during intense exercise when you're low on carbs. **Protein = 20g**

JOHN WEST MEXICAN-STYLE TUNA LUNCH ON THE GO (£2.50)

A tastier upgrade from a tin of tuna, this handy pot of tuna, beans and sweetcorn

is useful for eating on the go, as it requires no refrigeration. **Protein = 21g**

CLIF BUILDER'S PROTEIN BAR (£2.35/ 68G)

Highly rated for taste and texture, this protein bar made from soy protein has added vitamins and minerals. **Protein = 20g**

4 PROTEIN-RICH RECIPES

UDON NOODLES AND CRUNCHY VEGETABLES WITH CRISP TOFU

Preparation time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 10 minutes

Serves: 4

You will need:

- 200g (7oz) dried udon noodles or 2x 150g (5oz) packets straight-to-wok udon noodles
- 2 tbsp light olive or rapeseed oil
- 1 onion, thinly sliced



Udon noodles with crunchy veg and tofu

PRE-PACKED EAAs

Do you need protein supplements?

The International Association of Athletic Federations recommends whole-food sources of protein rather than supplements. Not only are they generally less expensive, but they can offer a range of other nutrients. What's more, studies have shown that food sources such as dairy or soya milk are just as effective for muscle recovery as protein supplements. Specifically, the interaction of the other nutrients contained within the food matrix may actually increase the use of protein for muscle repair.

Despite the attractive claims, there's no evidence that consuming more protein than you need will lead to bigger muscles or greater strength gains. However, protein shakes and bars are useful if you're training or competing in an environment where there's no opportunity to store or prepare foods, and may be helpful if you find it difficult to meet your protein quota from food alone.

Of the animal-based supplements, whey is a good post-exercise choice, as it is digested and absorbed rapidly, while casein taken before bedtime may help promote muscle recovery, as it is absorbed at a slower rate. Vegan protein foods tend to be bulkier and more filling, making it harder to meet daily protein needs. Another limitation is that most plant-based proteins fall short of one or two essential amino acids (EAAs), so won't promote muscle building as effectively as animal-based proteins unless two or more plant proteins are combined. Soy protein is your best option, as it has more leucine (an EAA thought to trigger muscle building) but pea and rice blends are also good.



Mix chickpeas with grains to cover your essential amino acid needs

- 1 yellow or red pepper, deseeded and sliced
- 100g (3 ½oz) sugar snap peas
- 150g (5oz) pak choi (Chinese cabbage), sliced
- 150g (5oz) shiitake mushrooms, thickly sliced
- 400g (14oz) extra-firm tofu, cut into 1cm (½in) thick slices

For the sauce:

- 2 tbsp sriracha chilli sauce
- 2 tbsp soy sauce
- 2 tbsp rice wine vinegar
- Juice of 1 lime
- 1 tbsp chopped coriander
- 2 tsp toasted sesame seeds

To serve:

- 2 tbsp toasted sesame seeds

Method:

- Cook the udon noodles (if using

dried) in a saucepan – follow packet instructions. Drain; place in a large bowl.

■ Make the spicy udon sauce by combining the chilli sauce, soy sauce, rice wine vinegar, lime juice, coriander and sesame oil in a small bowl.

■ Heat half of the oil in a wok over a medium-high heat until it is hot, add the onion and stir-fry for two minutes.

■ Add the remaining vegetables and continue stir-frying for four minutes. Transfer to a separate bowl.

■ For the tofu, wipe out the wok with absorbent kitchen paper. Heat the remaining oil over a high heat, add the tofu and fry for about two minutes on each side until they are crisp and brown. Remove to a plate.

■ Add the vegetables and fried tofu to the noodles and toss with the sauce. Serve sprinkled with sesame seeds.

Protein = 22g per serving

PLANT V ANIMAL

Where should your protein come from?

Although meat is a concentrated source of protein, you can easily obtain enough protein from other foods. Dairy, beans, lentils, tofu and eggs, for example, are all excellent sources of protein, so it's not difficult to get your daily quota. When we talk about protein, we are really talking about amino acids – the building blocks of proteins that are combined in many different ways by your body to make hundreds of different proteins, each with specific roles. Nine of these cannot be created in the body and are called 'essential amino acids' (EAAs). These must be provided by the diet.

It is the amount of these EAAs in foods that determines how useful the protein is to the body. Foods containing high levels of all EAAs are regarded as 'high quality' or 'complete' proteins. These include meat, dairy, eggs and soya. On the other hand, plant sources such as beans, lentils, nuts, seeds and grains are lacking in one or more essential amino acids, so are not as 'complete' or useful on their own. This makes them less efficient than animal proteins at building muscle. However, you can compensate for the lower anabolic properties of plant protein by eating bigger quantities to get higher amounts of EAAs or by combining more than one source to produce a more balanced amino acid profile, e.g. beans and rice. Maastricht University researchers showed that consuming 20g plant protein typically results in submaximal muscle protein synthesis (MPS) but consumption of a greater amount and/or combining more than one plant protein augments the MPS response.

ROASTED CARROTS, CHICKPEAS AND GRAINS WITH PECANS

Preparation time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 20 minutes

Serves: 4

You will need:

- 250g (9oz) carrots, cut into batons
- 1 red and 1 yellow pepper, deseeded and cut into 2cm strips
- 1 red onion, cut into 8 wedges
- 2 tbsp light olive or rapeseed oil
- 1 tsp za'atar (Middle Eastern herbs from most supermarkets) or dried thyme
- 125g (4oz) quinoa and bulgur (cracked) wheat mixture or 250g (8oz) packet cooked quinoa
- 500ml water
- 2x 400g (14oz) tins chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- 50g (2oz) pecans, toasted

- A small handful of fresh coriander or parsley, chopped, plus extra to serve
- Juice of ½ lemon
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 100g (3½oz) soft goat's cheese, crumbled (optional)

Method:

- Preheat the oven to 200°C/fan 180°C/gas mark 6.
- Toss the carrots, peppers and onions, oil, za'atar and seasoning in a roasting tin. Make sure the tin is large enough so the vegetables are in a single layer. Roast in the oven for about 20 minutes until the vegetables are slightly charred on the outside and tender in the middle.
- Meanwhile, cook the quinoa and bulgur wheat in water for 20 minutes until tender.
- Toss the roasted vegetables into the warm grains. Fold in the chickpeas,

Veggie chilli is hard to beat for a spicy protein-packed treat





Green Spanish tortilla: healthy, hearty and easy to prepare

pecans, coriander or parsley and lemon juice, then season to taste. Mound onto a plate, top with a little extra coriander and crumbled goats' cheese, if using.

Protein = 21g per serving

QUICK VEGETARIAN CHILLI

Preparation time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 15 minutes

Serves: 4

You will need:

- 1 tbsp light olive or rapeseed oil
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 2–3 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 tsp chilli powder, or to taste
- 1 tbsp sweet paprika
- ½ tsp dried oregano
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 400g (14oz) can chopped tomatoes
- 1 tbsp tomato purée
- 2x 400g (14oz) cans red kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 200g (7oz) can sweetcorn, drained
- 100g (3½oz) fresh or frozen spinach
- A handful of fresh parsley (optional)

- Salt and freshly ground pepper
- 125g (4oz) Cheddar, grated

Method:

- Heat the oil in a large non-stick pan over a medium heat.
- Add the onion and fry for three to four minutes until translucent. Add the garlic, chilli powder, paprika, oregano and cumin and cook for a further minute.
- Add the tomatoes, tomato purée, kidney beans and sweetcorn and bring to the boil. Reduce the heat and simmer for 10 minutes until the sauce has thickened.
- Season with salt and black pepper, then stir in the spinach and parsley. Turn off the heat let the spinach wilt.
- Divide between four bowls and scatter over grated cheese.

Protein = 20g per serving

GREEN SPANISH TORTILLA

Preparation time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 20 minutes

Serves: 4

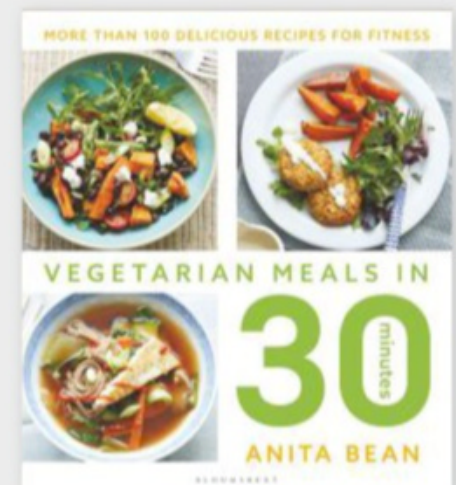
- 300g (11oz) new potatoes, peeled and

cut into medium slices

- 150g (5oz) green beans, halved
- 200g (7oz) frozen peas
- 200g (7oz) baby spinach
- 1 tbsp light olive or rapeseed oil
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 3 sprigs of thyme, leaves picked, or ½ tsp dried
- 2 handfuls of flat-leaf parsley, chopped
- 8 large eggs
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Method:

- Cook the potatoes in a large steamer or pan of boiling water for six minutes or until they turn tender.
- Add the green beans, peas and spinach for the last three minutes. Remove from the heat and set aside.
- Heat the oil in an ovenproof frying pan over a medium-low heat. Add the onion and fry for three minutes, until softened.
- Add the garlic, thyme, salt and pepper, mix well and cook for a further minute.
- Add the potato-vegetable mixture plus the parsley.
- Preheat the grill to medium.
- In a large bowl, beat the eggs, then add to the pan. Swirl the pan and cook over a gentle heat for four to five minutes until the mixture starts to set.
- Transfer to the grill and cook for two to three minutes or until the top of the top of the tortilla is golden and the middle no longer runny. Slide onto a board and serve with crusty bread and a tomato salad.



Recipes are extracted from *Vegetarian Meals in 30 Minutes: More than 100 delicious recipes for Fitness* by Anita Bean (Bloomsbury)



'Overnight my limbs stopped working'

Just getting back into cycling after a dalliance with motorsport, Ted Reddick was struck down by a debilitating neurological condition

A keen racing cyclist from the age of 18, Ted Reddick was still riding at a good club standard in his early 30s when work commitments started taking over.

"I'd clocked 21 minutes for 10 miles and 56 for 25 – all on steel bikes, none of this carbon stuff," recalls the Colnago devotee. "Cycling for me was everything. But in the back of my mind I knew I couldn't give it my all because of work."

In the Nineties, after taking a break from cycling to save energy for his career in property development, Reddick turned his attention to car racing – with notable success, becoming a regional champion. He didn't return to cycling until 2004, when aged 40 he treated himself to a Colnago Dream.

Three years later, his partner Su was diagnosed with cancer, and getting out on his bike became a coping strategy.

"Every morning, I'd ride out from Su's home in Eastbourne, over the marshes or up to Beachy Head. I got fit really quickly."

After Su died, in 2008, Reddick had to rebuild his life – and cycling again dissolved into the background.

"I'd bought a [Colnago] C50, but I put it in the garage, put a cover on it and didn't touch it again for years."

By autumn 2018, the Colnago was back in regular use; in fact, Reddick was busy amassing quite a collection of exotic Italian hardware.

"I ended up buying one of Rui Costa's Team Emirates [Colnago] C60s," he says – and warns me that at this point his story takes another life-changing turn. "The following week, I went away on holiday to Japan and started feeling a nagging pain in my shoulder."

On his fourth day in Japan, while out on an expedition, the minor twinge escalated into far more worrying symptoms.

"We were out in the sticks and had stopped for lunch when suddenly I couldn't lift my arms anymore," he says. "We returned to the hotel, and when I went to get off the bus, my right leg gave way."

He struggled through the rest of the day, and the next morning awoke to a nightmare.

"I couldn't get up. I crawled across the floor on my hands and knees; I couldn't even clean my teeth."

My girlfriend Zoe had to dress me, and then got me into a wheelchair."

He was wheeled onto a bullet train and sped to hospital in Kyoto, where medics ran myriad tests.

"An hour later, a doctor came back and showed me the scan: just below the base of my brain, there was a black mark on my spinal cord."

Further tests confirmed doctors' suspicions: Reddick was suffering from an extremely rare neurological condition called transverse myelitis (TM), which causes inflammation and compressive lesions on the spinal cord. The effects can be devastating, and only a minority of those with TM ever fully recover.

"Everything was shutting down," recalls Reddick. "I woke up the next morning thinking only, 'Can I talk?' – I was terrified that I was going to be locked in. Then my mind turned it all over: would I

ever ride or drive again? Would I even walk? What now?"

In 18 days, Reddick lost 10kg in weight; his mobility began returning but only incrementally, with the aid of painstaking daily physiotherapy. He was flown home and continued rehab, one small step at a time.

Now, nearly two and a half years on, Reddick still has little sensation from the chest down and has to use a catheter to pass urine. Only last spring did he finally feel able to get back on a bike.

"I got on my old mountain bike, just for a plod down the road, and it was the worst ride of my life."

I was in tears – everything hurt."

His damaged nerves cause a sensation of severe burning as he pedals, and his impaired balance and muscle weakness are such that getting off means dropping the bike on its side.

Nonetheless, he has persisted.

"After two months, I got on my Pinarello and did 18 miles at 12mph. I was so fed up – I used to be top of every Garmin segment on that route."

Now 56, Reddick is determined to be as physically active as possible. Last year he competed in the Inter Spinal Unit Games, and is searching for a new competitive outlet. Unfortunately, the condition is so rare that he has struggled to find advice or connect with others who have TM. Acknowledging his altered circumstances, Reddick knows he shouldn't compare ride speeds to his pre-TM performances, but he has no other yardstick.

"I managed 13mph on the Pinarello, and over many weeks worked my way up to 15.1mph – finally over 15!" Small improvements are big landmarks, and he remains determined to keep pushing himself. "How far can I go? No one knows. For now, I just want to raise awareness – there might be people out there with similar conditions who feel like giving up. To them I say, keep going. It's all about damn hard work."

David Bradford

NEUROLOGIST'S COMMENT

'THE IMMUNE SYSTEM ATTACKS'

Neurologist **Dr Ben Turner** is a consultant at London Bridge Hospital (HCA Healthcare UK): "The suffix '-itis' implies inflammation, and transverse myelitis is an inflammation of the spinal cord when the immune system turns against that particular tissue. It's an auto-immune condition, more likely after infection."

"Why does it pick just one part of the spinal cord? We don't know. It attacks at one level, across the spinal cord, thus 'transverse':

right across the cord, which is why those affected can lose everything: power, sensation, bladder control, even breathing."

"It affects one or two per 100,000 people, apparently at random. Only 10 to 20 per cent ever fully recover – nerve cells regenerate only very slowly, if at all. Though we encourage patients to be active, rebuilding muscles is dependent on repair of the nerves activating those muscles."

'WHAT I'VE LEARNT'

- 'Normal' is temporary.
- Live life to the fullest – you do not know what's around the corner.
- Not all disability is visible.
- The more 'normal' I look, the more more people believe I've fully recovered.
- Life's daily routine is focused around when I can safely self-catheterise!
- Get the best travel insurance you can afford.

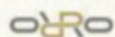
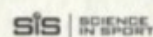
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TIME TRIALS

SAT, 29 FEBRUARY

VC Cumbria 31.2 (Circuit of Bassenthwaite Lake, Cumbria):

1. Liam Beaty (Hawick CC)	1:09.07
2. T. Broadbent (HD Revolutions)	1:12.57
3. C. Horseman (Beacon Wheelers)	1:14.19
4. N. Paterson (Velo Club Cumbria)	1:14.50
5. A. Taylor (Wigan Wheelers)	1:14.56
6. D. Hill (Velo Club Cumbria)	1:16.20
7. T. Clough (Springfield Financial RT)	1:16.21
8. C. Watts (Ilkley CC)	1:17.08
9. D. Huck (Barrow Central Wheelers)	1:17.11
10. P. David Fleming (Preston Whs)	1:17.17

Women: Christina Wiejak
(Jadan CycleSpace-Vive Le Velo) 1:20.05

Veterans: Craig Horseman (Beacon Wheelers) 1:14.19

Dursley Road Club 10 (Stone, Gloucestershire):

1. Nick Livermore (Bristol South CC)	21.10
2. T. Cross (Univ of Bristol CC)	21.52
3. E. Cross (Team Lifting Gear Products)	22.08
4. M. Dickerson (Skoda DSI Cycling Academy)	22.33
5. R. Francis (Reflex Racing)	22.38
6. K. Morris (Team Bottrill)	22.53
7. M. Davis (FTP Fulfil the Potential Racing)	22.54
8. J. O'Dwyer (Dursley RC)	23.02
9. W. Hamilton (Bristol South CC)	24.00
10. T. Bodey (Univ of Bristol CC)	24.56

Women: Megan Dickerson
(Skoda DSI Cycling Academy) 22.33

Cardiff 100 Miles RCC 15**(Abergavenny, Monmouthshire):**

1. Scott Davies (Team Bahrain McLaren)	30.22
2. N. Foster (Cardiff Ajax CC)	34.37
3. N. Morgan (Port Talbot Wheelers)	35.09
4. C. Voller (Newbury RC)	37.49
5. S. Kinsey (Virtual CC)	44.29
6. M. Williams (Hereford & Dist Wh)	46.07

Two-up: Ross Phillips (Pontypool RCC) & David Preece (Cwmcaron Paragon RC) 42.13

SUN, 1 MARCH

Banbury Star hardriders 23.5**(Wroxton, Oxfordshire):**

1. David Fellows (Solihull CC)	52.00
2. D. Mead (Race Rapid)	52.58
3. J. O'Neill (Team Jewson-MI Racing)	53.10
4. T. Wiesand (Banbury Star CC)	54.09
5. B. Carpenter (JRC Shutt Ridley RT)	54.36
6. R. Cutler (Beacon Roads CC)	55.06
7. J. Middleton (MediaVelo)	55.34
8. J. Garrett (Rugby Velo)	55.49
9. P. Atkins (Kenilworth Wheelers)	55.56

10. S. Smith (JRC Shutt Ridley RT) 56.01

Women: Lydia Watts (Liv AWOL) 1:01.52

Veterans: David Mead

Chippenham & Dist Wheelers 22**(Tormarton, Gloucestershire):**

1. Nick Livermore (Bristol South CC)	51.48
2. M. Stedman (Huntbikewheels.com)	52.34
3. R. Grover (Rogue Racing)	53.27
4. T. Cross (University of Bristol CC)	54.01
5. R. Francis (Reflex Racing)	55.35
6. J. Lawrence (Salt and Sham CC)	55.38
7. A. Robertson (Reflex Racing)	56.11
8. J. Benjamin (Bradford-on-Avon CC)	56.25
9. T. Chapman (Frome and District Wh)	56.42
10. D. Bolton (Bristol South CC)	57.01

Woman: Megan Dickerson
(Skoda DSI Cycling Academy) 57.28

Veteran: Jeff Lawrence (Salt and Sham CC) 55.38

University of Manchester CC 25**(Goostrey, Cheshire):**

1. Alastair Ribbands (Manchester Wheelers)	54.25
2. Richard Bott (Richard Bott Racing)	54.35
3. David Griffiths (Bioracer-Moriarty Bikes)	54.52
4. Scott Burns (Manchester Bicycle Club)	54.57
5. Alan Chorley (Seamons CC)	56.34
6. Adrian Hughes (Seamons CC)	56.57
7. Adam Darby (Velotik Racing Team)	57.10
8. Thomas Garbett (Total Tri Training)	57.39
9. Simon Deeley (Team Huub)	58.37
10. Stephen Dooley (Seamons CC)	59.47

Woman: Michelle Fairclough (Salford CC) 1:11.20

ROAD RACING

SAT, 29 FEBRUARY

ART Winter Crit Series round four**(Abingdon airfield, Oxfordshire):**

E, 1, 2, 3: 1. Alex Richardson (Alpecin); 2. J. Ashcroft (NopinZ Symec Development Team); 3. M. Mottram (Vitus Pro Cycling); 4. J. Francis (ActiveEdge RT); 5. A. Strudwick (Team Milton Keynes); 6. K. Hatwell (Ilkeston Factory Racing); 7. G. Davies (Thames Velo); 8. D. Hird (Halesowen A&CC Academy); 9. D. McQuillan (NopinZ-Symec Race Team); 10. M. Hermon (Mickey Cranks CC).

Women 2, 3, 4: 1. Lauren Johnston (Avid Sport);

2. E. Callinan (AWOL); 3. V. Lovett (AWOL);

4. M. Hodges (Avid Sport); 5. L. Watts (AWOL);

6. B. Dew (Army CU).

Third Cat: 1. Steven Wootton (Team Milton

Keynes); 2. J. Tuttle (VeloElite RC); 3. J. Corbishley

(Team Milton Keynes); 4. S. Brierley (VeloElite RC);

5. F. Loveday (Team Surrey Cycling); 6. T. Coombe

(Thames Velo).

RIDER OF THE WEEK

**Nick Livermore (Bristol South CC)
Dursley RC 10 & Chippenham
Wheelers 22**

Livermore made a great start to his season, the 29-year-old from Bristol taking victory in both these early season time trials in Gloucestershire last weekend.

Fourth Cat: 1. Dean Haden (Inflite-Dynamic Rides RT); 2. R. Down (unattached); 3. A. Rankin (Inflite-Dynamic Rides RT); 4. B. Hammonds (Team Surrey Cycling); 5. W. Carter (unattached); 6. P. Holloway (Didcot Phoenix CC).

Yorkshire Winter Series round five**(Doncaster, South Yorkshire):**

E, 1, 2, 3: 1. Matthew Lock (Cliff Pratt Racing);

2. C. Sherriffs (Crimson Orientation Marketing RT);

3. M. Chadwick (Clancy Briggs); 4. K. Hotson

(Cleveland Wheelers); 5. G. Peden (Prologue RT);

6. D. Watson (Clancy Briggs); 7. F. Pett (DAP CC);

8. E. Ward (Inflite-Dynamic Rides RT); 9. C.

Walkinshaw (Team PB Performance); 10. B. Richards (Brother UK).

3, 4: 1. Curtis Maltby (Geared Up C and N Cycles);

2. R. Webster (Ayr Roads CC); 3. C. Walker

(Loughborough Students CC); 4. J. Hepworth

(PMRR); 5. G. Radcliffe (Otley CC); 6. B. Richards

(Brother UK); 7. D. Leeming-Sykes (Otley CC); 8. J.

Davey (PMRR); 9. D. Norris (Wold Top The Edge RT);

10. T. Harmer (PMRR).

SUN, 1 MARCH

Severn Bridge-BW Cycling Road Race**(Marlwood, Gloucestershire):**

E, 1, 2, 3: 1. George Mills-Keeling (Ribble Weldtite

Pro Cycling) 75 miles in 2:58.00; 2. J. Rees

(Bikestrong-KTM); 3. E. Ward (Inflite-Dynamic Rides

RT); 4. S. Clark (MB Cyclery); 5. J. Housley (Team PB

Performance); 6. O. Winwood-Bratchell (VC Venta);

7. N. McKibbin (Zappi's RT); 8. M. Downie (NopinZ

Symec Race Team); 9. A. Cox (Team Bottrill); 10. C.

McNamara (Nuun-Sigma Sports London RT).

King of the Mountains: Josh Housley.

Junior: Sam Freeman (Z Junior RT).

Local rider: Joe Griffiths (Torq Performance).

Team: NopinZ-Symec Race Team.

LAST WEEK

Omloop van het Hageland (March 1)

Dutch road champion Lorena Wiebes took the first win of her 2020 campaign at Omloop van het Hageland on Sunday. The Prudential RideLondon Classique champion, who is just 20 years old, outsprinted last year's winner Marta Bastianelli after the wonderfully aggressive race came back together on the last of five 15km laps.

Royal Bernard Drome Classic (March 1)

Simon Clarke (EF Education First) outsprinted home rider Warren Barguil (Arkéa-Samsic) in this hilly one-dayer in the Rhone-Alpes on Sunday, with Vincenzo Nibali (Trek-Segafredo) third, two seconds back. Clarke and Barguil attacked on the Côte de Grane with 15km to ride and held off to the finish.

Kuurne-Brussels-Kuurne Juniors (March 1)

British riders put in a fine showing in the junior edition of this early semi-Classic, with Jack Rootkin-Gray's third place backed up by Robert Donaldson in ninth. Adam Mitchell, Oliver Stockwell and Max Poole came in 12th, 13th and 14th. The 120km race features six climbs including the Oude Kwaremont.

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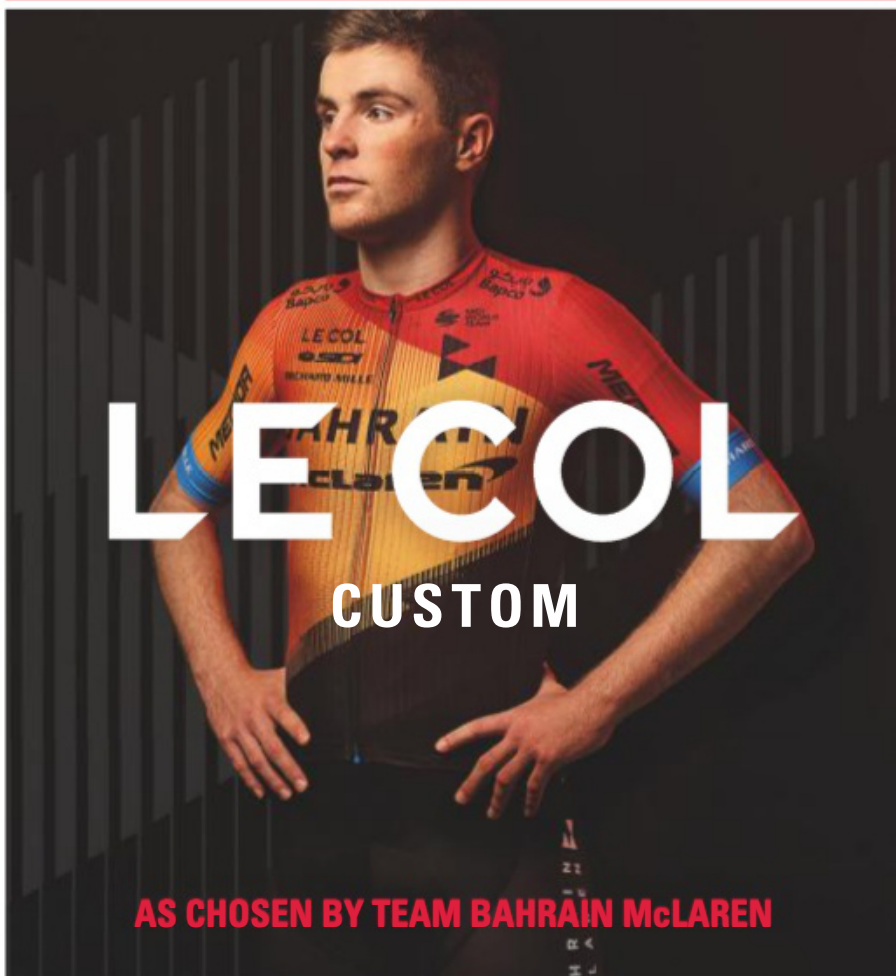
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Dr Hutch

The Doc's carefree squelch around the fields of South Cambridgeshire evolves into a muddy skirmish with a gravel biker

I was out running the other day. I know this is disloyal to cycling. And, given that the last time I went running I broke my hip, it's also probably a bit stupid. But if there's one thing I've learned about myself, it's that I'm very resistant to learning.

The concession to my injury that I've made is to avoid running on rock-hard roads and pavements, and stick to paths and tracks. Round my way these are a bit dull – generally round the edges of flat arable fields, and at this time of year usually half flooded, so it's a bit like running through a shallow bog. There is a splash with each step, and I get home looking like a normal human being from the front and a cyclo-crosser from the back.

On this particular path there was a curious groove down the middle of the boggiess. Only when it wobbled briefly into two separate grooves did I recognise it as the work of a brother or sister cyclist. To my pleasure I realised he was not that far



doctorhutch_cycling@ti-media.com

ahead, and I was catching him. There are few pleasures to equal overtaking a cyclist on foot. The pleasure was in no way diminished when I caught up, and realised he was riding a very expensive gravel bike, at 8mph through a bog. There is absolutely no way he would not have been having more fun on a road. Or, if he simply had to come out bog-snorkelling in this particular field, he'd have been better on a mountain bike.

Frankly, the only actual gravel in South Cambridgeshire is on people's driveways – the rest is either asphalt or mud. But I deeply admire someone who is determined to be fashionable in the face of all contrary logic.

Battle of the bog

I overtook, with the same casual greeting I use for keeping all the other local cyclists in order.

Not long after, he came back past, shovelling as hard as he could on a huge



Great Inventions of Cycling

1887 Wide tyres

The first pneumatic tyres were nice and wide – they varied quite a bit but were often over 30mm in width. They were compliant, comfortable and much faster than any of the skinny solid tyres that had gone before. They revolutionised cycling.

Over the following century, the prevailing wisdom came to be that on road bikes narrower must be better. They looked fast, and that was what counted.

So widths dropped. By the 1980s the fashionable tyre widths had thinned to around 18mm, at which point if you collided with a fly you could slice it clean in two. To compensate for the very narrow width and avoid impact punctures, improved

construction and silk carcasses allowed tyre pressures up to around 200psi.

This faithfully mimicked the performance of the wretched solid tyres from the 19th century. An 18mm, 200psi tyre on anything other than a wooden track was enough to shake your contact lenses out. If you combined them with an alloy-framed bike, it would shake your eyes out too.

In recent years tyre widths have finally begun to increase again – many road riders have now gone to 25 or 28mm tyres. It's faster, more comfortable, and it means flies can surf along in front of you in the aerodynamic bow-wave, like dolphins in front of a ship.



The Doc flounders in the wake of his fishtailing foe

gear. His bike was sunk so deep in the mire that the bottom of each rim was fully submerged. It was like being overtaken by a paddle steamer.

This was an act of *lèse-majesté*. I upped the pace and re-passed him. This time he jumped on behind and started what I can only describe as heel-sucking.

“He started what can only be described as heel-sucking”

It was absurd. These days I don’t normally think of myself as a competitive person. If I’m out for a run and another runner comes by, I let them go. Sometimes if he or she is only a little faster I even stop for a few moments to give them some space. I have much the same carefree vibe when someone overhauls me out on the bike, or at least I imagine I would do if it was the sort of thing that ever happened.

But somehow when the two disciplines were mixed something went wrong. So

there I was, splashing across a field in my plimsolls, closely pursued by an unfit man riding the wrong bike badly.

Finally he came back past. The field dropped away a little, and he picked up some speed, bounding and fishtailing wildly from one side of the path to the other and coating himself in yet more mud.

I got discarded for good.

And in so many ways that is the glory of the bicycle. There was nothing right about this rider or his bike. I, on the other hand, was fit, wearing the right shoes and have a running technique I’ve been honing since I was two years old. He still rode away from me.

At least he looked back at me over his shoulder often enough to make it clear that he’d found me really, really annoying. So I could still score it as a personal victory.

DEAR DOC

A meeting with an old club-mate reminded me of racing in the 1970s, when we were both juniors. We were coached by his dad, who combined an old-school approach with, in retrospect, almost total ignorance of coaching.

He was convinced that the chemical compound in stinging nettles was a performance-enhancer. To this end, before important races he’d don a pair of gardening gloves and stuff a bunch of nettles down our jerseys just before the start.

I’ve never yet discovered, and my mate doesn’t know either, whether his dad genuinely believed this, or if he was a sadist who was just trying to get us to give up cycling so he could have his Sundays back. I’m not sure which would be worse.

William M, email

Luis Ocaña's Speedwell Titalite

Eddy Merckx's arch-rival turned to titanium for a competitive edge

In the early 1970s aerodynamics was for aeroplanes, not bikes. It was low weight that made racing cyclists go faster no matter the terrain.

Even though his 1972 Hour record attempt took place on a completely flat velodrome, Eddy Merckx's specially built track bike was pared and drilled until it weighed 5.75 kilos; it had a space-age titanium stem from the USA and the tyres were pumped up with helium.

This titanium did not escape the notice of Luis Ocaña, the prodigiously talented Spaniard who had the misfortune to be exactly the same age as Merckx — the two were born within eight days of each other in June 1945. In any other era Ocaña would have been the great champion, but instead he simply could not beat Merckx.

Ocaña crashed out of the 1971 Tour de France while wearing the yellow jersey chasing Merckx down the Col de Menté

and in 1972 he abandoned with bronchitis. Merckx had won every edition of the race since 1969.

So in 1973 when British bike trade legend Ron Kitching offered Ocaña not just a titanium stem but a whole bike made from the wonder metal, he grabbed the opportunity with both hands.

The Speedwell Gear Case Company of Birmingham had originally used titanium to manufacture equipment for the chemical industry — ideal since it doesn't contaminate or corrode. Next it made motocross motorcycle frames out of titanium. After they were banned by the sport's international federation, it turned to bicycles.

The first Speedwell titanium frame was delivered to Ocaña in the middle of the 1973 Dauphiné Libéré, which he was riding as his Tour de France warm-up race.

Ocaña's mechanic built it up overnight; the Spaniard went on to take the overall win.

He was in the form of his life and ready to do battle with Merckx. However, Merckx had done the Vuelta-Giro double and did not start the Tour de France, leaving Ocaña the pre-race favourite and denying the fans what might have been the most spectacular duel yet.

Ocaña dominated, riding the Speedwell for the 10 most mountainous stages, holding the yellow jersey from stage eight through to the end and beating Bernard Thévenet by over 15 minutes.

The Titalite frame cost £160 to buy — around £1,700 in today's money. With Britain going into recession in 1973, the Speedwell mirrored Ocaña's own career: it was unique and exotic but its timing was unfortunate. Production ceased in 1977, the same year that Ocaña retired.



Ocaña rode the Titalite to victory in the 1973 Tour de France

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