

AeroGeeks

TriTech for the Masses

FLO Cycling FLO 30 – First Ride

April 11, 2013 · by aerogeeks · in By Devon, First Ride, Wheels ·

We don't much like blanket statements here at AeroGeeks HQ. There's nearly always a whole mess of exceptions that we have to weasel around to make them fit. But there is a universal truth to cycling, and it goes like this: climbing sucks. Climbing really sucks. So anything that makes climbing suck less gets our attention and, if it really is as good as the claims surrounding it, our praise. FLO Cycling's (<http://www.flocycling.com/>) FLO 30 is firmly in the latter category, and the reasons may surprise you.



(http://aerogeeks.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/img_20130329_115549.jpg)

First, the 30 is not a deep-section carbon wheel. In fact, there isn't any carbon fiber at all. The 30 is an all-aluminum wheelset with a comparatively shallow 30mm toroidal profile for what's meant to be a go-fast setup for racing, but the 1,585g claimed weight [Editors Update: FLO let us know the claimed weight was 1,585g versus the 1,600g we originally stated] completes the picture here. The FLO 30 isn't trying to be a flat-course wheelset; that's what the 60, 90 and DISC are for. The 30's are for when the course has a "percent grade" notation in the packet – these are for climbing and boy, do they.



http://aerogeeks.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/img_20130329_115809.jpg

Take the 30's out for a spin on the flats and they perform exactly as you expect a shallow-section wheel to perform—with all the benefits of the toroidal shape to boot. They spin quickly, are snappy to sprint, don't budge in the wind, and are reasonably speedy in a head wind while maintaining exceptional control in the cross winds. Dial up the grade from 0, however, and it quickly becomes clear that they are missing two-thirds of a pound of rotating weight versus the 60s. And every gram missing is a reason to smile while flying by other riders on the ascent. The stiffness of the aluminum construction is immediately evident when a string of curses does not accompany the mashing pedals, as is the smooth rolling of FLO's hubs when that half-a-heartbeat pause in pedal stroke doesn't drop the Garmin's speed indicator into the single digits. This is what a good wheelset feels like.

http://aerogeeks.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/img_20130329_115836.jpg

All that said, it is worth noting that the FLO 30s, while still on a major diet from the 60s, are of a similar weight to a pair of Zipp FireCrest 404s. In addition, since the 30s maintain an aluminum braking surface, they do not require a deal with the devil on descents to come out rubber-side down on tricky switchbacks. The wide track also gives the 30s an excellent cornering ability and confidence on less than

stellar roads where a narrower contact patch might end the ride with a puncture. However, the width never feels fat, per se. Indeed, there is such a minimum amount of fuss to these wheels that the level of confidence they inspire is almost unimaginable. You can get all this for under \$500.



(<http://aerogeeks.files.wordpress.com/2013/04/2013-03-30-16-46-08.jpg>)

It is our opinion that this last point is the most compelling. There may be lighter wheels out there. There might be cheaper wheels. But the 30s strike a balance between the two that is intriguing from a value perspective. We're going to put more climbing miles on them in the coming month, most notably attacking the only climbing worth mentioning in all of Florida – Clermont. The 30s tackle the rolling course and the minor climbs like champs, but time will tell if they can make the summit of a serious climb with the minimum of drama they have shown thus far.

Tags: [Flo 30](#), [Flo Cycling](#), [Flo Cycling Flo 30](#), [Flo Cycling FLO30](#), [FLO30](#)

16 responses on “FLO Cycling FLO 30 – First Ride”

1. [Kyle Harris](#) [April 11, 2013 at 4:51 pm](#) · [Reply](#) →
Great review, just one question. What Flo wheels would you recommend for IM Wisconsin? Im having a hard time deciding.
 - [aerogeeks](#) [April 11, 2013 at 6:39 pm](#) · [Reply](#) →
Thanks for the compliments. We put blood, sweat and tears into every review and appreciated the feedback.

Personally no one on the AG staff has done IM Wisconsin so our commentary is based on the research we could find. For IM Wisconsin I would personally be riding at least a 60/60 combo and most likely a 60/90. Looking at the course map, plus a number of posts on slowtwitch, people are consistently running discs, so that tells me the weight gain of a disc is manageable over the length of the course (our one concern with the 60s) and that wind is not a huge factor. Stronger riders may even want to consider a disc (with both its slightly heavier weight and greater susceptibility to wind), but again that would really be dependent on the riding style of the rider themselves.

I found this (<http://www.mapmyride.com/routes/view/1931371>) which covers the elevation profile of the course and one of the items that stands out are the consistent climbs (however we cannot certify that this map is correct so please do not take it as gospel). I would heavily recommend training for these types of climbs with a heavier version of your race rig to acclimate for the race. Personally I always train with 3-4 filled water bottles mounted to the bike to weigh it down a bit.

Remember at the end it comes down to your riding style and strengths. If you are not comfortable riding aero or have concerns with either wind or weight, go with the 30s. I am a firm believer that the best way to get fast is have absolute confidence in your bike, and if the 30s are going to give you that confidence then go with them.

2. *Barchettaman* [April 12, 2013 at 5:48 pm](#) · · [Reply](#) →

Unless you're riding in a crosswind hurricane a disc will actually make your bike more stable. Guys, I love your reviews, but get your basic facts right, they will lend your opinions more credence.

◦ *aerogeeks* [April 12, 2013 at 8:56 pm](#) · · [Reply](#) →

First I wanted to say thanks for reading the blog. We have to admit how much we love hearing people tell us they enjoy the posts and hugely appreciate getting feedback on them.

Second, we never meant to imply anything against discs, quite the opposite in fact; we like discs, and agree that it takes some strong winds to make a disc less stable than the more traditional counterparts. We also agree that they will generally be faster than just about any other wheel option... except when you're dealing with sustained climbing, which, from what we can find, IM Wisconsin features (<http://www.runtri.com/2008/01/ironman-wisconsin-triathlon-bike-course.html> seems to concur).

Now, that said, the climb seems to have an average grade about 2%, total distance doesn't seem too terrible, and there's plenty of flat work, so our buddy is given a choice on this one: run a disc rear, or run a 90. So let's take a look at the wind –

<http://www.beginnertriathlete.com/discussion/forums/thread-view.asp?tid=227832&start=41> seems to suggest that it's gusty, but sustained is 12-15, which, if we're talking about that at ground level, isn't trivial. Mike's last HIM was brutal for winds (20 sustained), and he was getting blown all over on a set of Reynolds 60s (Strikes) by riding almost perpendicular to the wind- a disc might well have been uncontrollable in that kind of crosswind.

There's a... level of skill that comes into play when you start riding discs. Much like going from your standard box wheels to deep-section carbon, the adjustment period, and the confidence building, aren't necessarily small. Presuming that Mr. Harris gets his new wheels in Pre-Order 5, he'll get them sometime in June or so, giving him about two months to get back into his groove until he's got to put 112 miles of some tricky turns while descending. Can he do it? Sure; we have nothing but the utmost confidence in our readers. He can conquer a disc just as easily as he can conquer his IM. Our point, really, is that there's a ton of things that go wrong in training, on the course, wherever, in the months leading up to the big race. If he's got only enough money for a single wheelset, a 60/90 would be our choice for the cost effective purchase. If he needs a disc, a wheel cover would work, too!

In the end, I think we're all saying the same thing: Fastest option is a disc. They're controllable and quick even in a stiff breeze, but there's a skill level associated with it. Would you take one as your only rear wheel? Probably not; we wouldn't, at least. If we had the money for an extra wheel; it'd be a different question, but Mr. Harris asked for our recommendation – and in that, we stand by the 60/90.

3. *Barchettaman* [April 13, 2013 at 3:05 am](#) · · [Reply](#) →

Mike would have been much more stable in that sustained crosswind, and likely faster too, as the he reaped the benefit of the sail effect from the disc! C'mon guys, this is basic stuff.

Nothing to 'conquer' about riding a disc. Dave Ripley explains it better than I can:

“And, to finally debunk the “too windy” myth, the faster the wind gets, the faster the disc gets. Because the disc has a constant surface area there is nothing to disrupt the airflow across it. This accelerates the flow across the windward side and releases the low pressure pocket on the leeward side- stabilizing the entire bike. This balancing act also shifts the center of pressure of the whole bike and rider system towards the rear, relieving some pressure off of the front wheel...allowing it to steer more freely.

If you want to test this for yourself, throw a disc on your bike, but keep your shallow section training wheel on the front. You will realize pretty quickly that the disc is not affecting your handling in a negative fashion, except for making the bike feel more stable. Now, throw on your deep section race wheel and go ride. You will see immediately that this is the culprit. The key is practice...ride this combo and get used to it. The speed is worth it.”

There is, on the other hand, a lot to consider about riding a deep front in windy conditions, with the torque forces acting on the steering column. I have 40mm Campagnolo Shamals (650c) on my folding road bike and definitely notice a difference in gusty conditions compared to the box-section 36 spoke wheels on my road commuter.

Aerogeeks should know and understand aerogeeky stuff!

◦ *aerogeeks* [April 13, 2013 at 2:51 pm](#) · · [Reply](#) →

In transition there is definitely an amount of a you can ride a disc or cannot mentality; yet as you, Dave (<http://scienceoftriathlon.blogspot.com/2013/03/should-i-ride-disc-guest-post-by-wheel.html>), and many others point out, there is absolutely no need for that. In the AG queue is a

multi-article spread of taking a MOP AG athlete and having them learn to ride and race a disc. We believe that part of dispelling the myth of discs is not just to throw science behind it, but to go in-depth from an athlete's point of view and show that with some training and regular use, a disc can be part of any triathlete's arsenal.

Thanks again for the comments!

- *Barchettaman* [April 15, 2013 at 1:23 am](#) · ·

Erm, can I have that in English please? I don't mean to be a complete d*ck but I really don't understand that.

Bottom line is, aerogeeks should be recommending a wheelcover to everyone!

4. *Barchettaman* [April 13, 2013 at 4:37 am](#) · · [Reply](#) →

<http://www.arniebakercycling.com/pubs/Free/Time%20Trialing%20Disc%20on%20Hills%20ABC.pdf>

5. *Kyle Harris* [April 13, 2013 at 10:01 am](#) · · [Reply](#) →

Well written response, I appreciate the time and research done. I will definitely be taking your recommendation into consideration.

- *aerogeeks* [April 13, 2013 at 2:12 pm](#) · · [Reply](#) →

Thanks Kyle. You may want to jump on Slowtwitch as well to see what others who have ridden IM Wisconsin are saying as well. Remember to give yourself plenty of time to acclimate to the wheelset. Best of luck!

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