

# Qatar Sandstormers

Qatar's Charity Cycling Team

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## Co-Owner & Co-Creator of FLO Cycling Chats with Qatar Sandstormers

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Jon and Chris Thornham, the creators and owners of FLO Cycling

Hey Jon! Thanks for taking the time out to have a chat with us about your awesome new venture, creating affordable, high



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performance, carbon wheels for the world of cycling!

**FLO is out on a mission. Can you tell us what your mission is?**

*Before we started FLO Cycling we noticed there were two types of wheel manufacturers in the industry. First, there were companies who put a lot of research and development (R&D) into their products. These companies sold their wheels through a standard distribution model (Manufacturer -> Owner -> Distributor -> Retailer -> Customer) and the prices were high. They typically ranged from \$2,000-\$6,000 per set.*

*The second type of company that existed in the industry did not conduct their own R&D. Instead of designing their own products, they purchased “pre-designed” wheels from factories. These type of wheels are typically referred to as “open mold designs” and can be purchased by any buyer who meets the minimum order quantity. These companies typically do not follow the standard distribution model discussed above, but instead sell direct to their customers (Manufacturer -> Owner -> Customers). This distribution method is commonly referred to as “consumer direct”. Prices for open mold, consumer direct wheels, are typically in the \$1100-\$1800 range.*

*Our mission when starting FLO Cycling was to combine the best of both worlds. We used our mechanical engineering degrees to design some of the fastest wheels on the market today, and use the “consumer direct” distribution model for sales. This allows us to sell a set of our wheels for \$898 dollars and still have our own proprietary designs. Our motto has always been, “charge what we need to”. Our customers appreciate that.*

**Carbon fibre has been in use in cycling for at least 10 years now. Why are production costs still very high even though demand and volume has grown tremendously?**

*Carbon fiber prices are high for a few reasons. First of all, the time required to create carbon fiber products can be quite extensive. So while the carbon fiber itself is cheap, the labor quickly drives*

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*the price up. The second reason is the distribution model used to sell the product. The standard distribution model discussed above quickly raises the price of a product as it passes from one set of hands to the next. This is why companies that sell consumer direct can bring the prices down by significant amounts. We published a blog post that discusses this in greater detail. You can find the article by clicking [here](#).*

**Your current focus is on aero wheels built through what kind of technology? Could you tell us more about how this gives your products an edge?**

*Creating aerodynamic products requires lots of testing because there is no way to determine exactly how a shape will respond aerodynamically, until it is tested. We have pretty good ideas, but the exact results are unknown.*

*Knowing this, shapes were traditionally tested in wind tunnels. This is very time consuming and at \$500-\$1,000/hr, very expensive. To cut costs, we use Computational Fluid Dynamics software to complete the original tests on our shapes. This is basically a wind tunnel on a computer. It saves both time and money and allows us to get a better understanding of how a shape is reacting under certain wind conditions. Once we have our original tests completed, we complete our final tests in a real world wind tunnel.*

*We've written a tutorial for those interested in cycling wheel aerodynamics. You can find the link to the article [here](#).*



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## FLO Cycling Pre-Order 8

**Innovations in cycling are developing through aero and mass efficiency through evolving use of carbon fibre. Are there any other areas of development for carbon in this regard?**

*The materials and resins are getting better. Heat is a big issue with carbon fiber wheels. When a rider brakes on a carbon fiber brake track, the heat rises quickly. If the temperature gets too high (above the glass temperature) the epoxy can break down. Better epoxies raise glass temperatures of the carbon fiber and reduce the heat issues.*

*There is also a lot of study being done on high modulus and low modulus carbon fiber. Great frame builders are constantly tweaking the locations and type of carbon fiber in their frames to optimize, weight, stiffness, and compliance/comfort.*

**With so many products out there, what would you recommend to new cyclists when purchasing their first set of wheels? It can be pretty daunting.**

*There are several things that need to be considered when buying a set of race wheels. We've actually written what we call "The Ultimate Guide to Buying Race Wheels". It's our non-biased advice to anyone considering purchasing race wheels. You can find the two part guide [here](#) and [here](#).*

**FLO** Bike for a Kid

**We love your Bike for Kid initiative. How did that start and how can people get involved in that initiative, besides purchasing products?**

*When starting FLO Cycling we knew we wanted to give back. Bikes were a big part of our childhood and now our lives and culture as a business. We knew that many children did not have*



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*the opportunity to own their own bike and we wanted to do our part to change that. Our Bike for a Kid program is our answer to that problem.*

*If someone would like to get involved they can donate at the link below.*

<http://www.crowdrise.com/bikeforakid/fundraiser/musicthatmoves1>

### Are you delivering to the Middle East yet?

Yes, we've been shipping internationally from day one. We have shipped wheels to Qatar and the surrounding area.

### About the Creators of FLO Cycling

Jon and Chris Thornham, the creators and owners of FLO Cycling, are twin brothers and mechanical engineers. Chris is a triathlete and Jon a cyclist. The idea for FLO Cycling started when Chris was in the market for high performance race wheels. After purchasing a set, he felt there was a more affordable way to produce a similar or even better product. From that day, their goal was to create high quality, affordable race wheels and they haven't looked back since. For their full story, be sure to check out this [link](#) that highlights their journey from day one.

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## About Qatar Sandstormers

We are a fundraising cycling team based in Doha and partners with Sheikh Eid Charity Foundation supporting the Beitak Beiti بيتك بيتي

Project We represent Qatar in the annual Global Biking Initiative ride in Europe. We are heading from Paris to Dusseldorf on June 30 on a 6 day ride to raise awareness for our charity project the Beitak Beiti Initiative. The Beitak Beiti initiative aims at raising QAR 300,000 in its first phase, to support over 200 poor and disadvantaged families without the basic necessities to live a decent life in Qatar. Basic necessities include refrigerators, air conditioners and safe cooking stoves.

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