

# You get what you pay for

A CYCLIST'S saddle and tyres are his best friends, three points of suspension which can make or break him.

Experts have been known to tell the weight of their tyres to the nearest half-ounce, but only to them, one feels, would it make any difference. But the puncture or blowout you could get from using the wrong 'tub', could make the difference.

Take a wheel, wet the tyre, stand it on a sheet of paper, and rest your weight on it; you will have a wet strip about five inches long, half an inch wide. For an average rider it's about 30 pounds per square inch pressing on about five square inches of rubber. But what sort of rubber?

Try this: ride with a friend to a short steep hill when it has been raining, one on a smooth tyre, the other on a good patterned tread. Each try sprinting up the hill on each bike, that will convince you of the need for a good tread.

If you can get access to rollers and several wheels, try riding them with the various types of tyre on the back, h.p., heavy tub, light tub, hard or soft. You will then be convinced of the need for light hard tyres, for your racing at least.

Remember you get what you pay for, you will get no more racing out of a 12oz cheap tyre than from a 9oz top-quality tubular.

The 'economy' racing man will opt for a pair of good cotton road tyres with a file or ribbed thread, which will weigh 8-9oz and probably cost £9-£10 each, with maybe a third as his spare.

With no more than reasonable care, a time trialist should be able to ride a full season of up to 50 events on one pair. I did two good seasons on a pair of 10oz road tubs, then gave them away to a lad to use for his racing and then training—now four years later!

On tyres heavy enough to last through a Milk Race of 1,500 hard miles, riders have done 53 minutes for 25 miles, 21 minutes for 10 miles!

But let us say you can afford a second pair, perhaps to go track racing.

Here you should look for a tubular with a plain cotton base tape—most road tyres have a rubberised cotton base tape. The plain dry cotton will accept shellac, (see 'Stick with It') which will be necessary if you go to Calshot one weekend or if you want to race on a steep outdoor track like Leicester. On the track you can run a couple of ounces lighter, or, since you'll be riding in the dry, you might go for top-quality silk tyres.

Wet is death to a silk tubular, though in the dry a good silk 6oz track tyre might be used for a fast '10' on a good road.

The roadman, of course, has no way out like this. Security in the bunches, his own and others', means a good tread on the tyre, of cotton, for use in the wet.

Usually he would choose a tubular with a puncture-resistant 'imperf' band, file-and-ribbed thread, and whether he chooses a fat or narrow tyre depends on his own bulk.

How hard do you pump them?

Your 'wet-paper' test can show you how much the area of the rubber varies with pressure, and the rollers will tell you how much your effort varies with pressure.

Silk tyres—which presume dry smooth roads—will stand about 130psi, cotton will take about 110psi, while for reasons of comfort in longer races, the roadman who ventured much above 100psi would be hardy indeed.

So have fun, but remember, you get what you pay for!

**When buying tubulars always  
consult your dealer first,  
his advice  
could save you money**

# Stick with it!

HOW your tubulars are fixed to your rims means nearly as much as the choice of the tyres.

For tubular tyres do not just 'hold' on a rim, they have to be stuck down, with either a rubber-based solution or with shellac.

If they don't stick firmly when you sprint or brake they will creep backwards and forwards, perhaps tearing the inner tube at the valve, and when you corner they will roll, perhaps right off! Creeping is frequently the cause of complaints about a 'bump' in the tyre at the valve.

Start with a dry clean rim and a new tyre. Score the rim with a rasp or coarse emery paper, to provide a key. Inflate the tyre lightly—about 10 pump strokes—and fit it to the rim dry, if it goes on easily inflate it hard and leave it overnight to settle, oh, and use a push-on, not a screw-on connector.

If a tub needs stretching, don't just heave it at. Place your foot on the base tape, and with both hands pull it firmly and evenly, repeating every six inches or so, till you've done all the tyre. This will ease the material considerably.

Put it on the rim and ease about nine inches of the tyre off the rim with your hands—never use levers. Carefully and evenly coat the rim with solution, and the base tape, and fit that section, repeating until all the tyre is stuck.

It is useful to leave the space between the two spokes opposite the valve clean, except with track tyres, as this makes it easier to remove the tyre when puncturing in a race.

Track tyres should be stuck with shellac, which you can buy from a chemist or hardware store, usually in flake form. These flakes are dissolved in methylated spirit, usually two of spirit to one of shellac, but you can vary this, the idea is to have a solution with the consistency of warm treacle, which may take a day or so.

Start with a clean dry roughened rim, never, ever, put shellac onto a rim which has any trace of rubber solution on it.

Paint the shellac onto the rim and leave it to dry for 24 hours, three

thin coats being better than one thick coat. Repeat this two or three times, and then put on the last coat, before it dries, a thin strip of gauze—a bandage will do excellently. This will form a 'bed' for the tyre which will not peel away, leave it to dry, and put another coat on. While it is soft, yet not tacky fit a dry tyre, and inflate hard, this will 'shape' the shellac bed as it dries.

While the shellac has been drying, you will have put a coat of shellac on the plain cotton base tape, dried it and put another on. Be certain that your base tape is thoroughly stuck on the tyre, if it isn't, put corks in the spoke holes and shellac on without the tape.

Make sure, by the way, that the tub is stretched as shellac sometimes has the effect of 'shrinking' the base tape.

Finally, re-coat both the rim and the tyre, and when both are tacky, fit the tyre carefully, and roll the wheel with your full weight resting on the inflated tyre, to force it into the bed.

Wipe off excess shellac with a rag soaked in meths, and leave to dry overnight after inflating hard.

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## **These shoes aren't meant for walking!**

JUST as a farm-worker uses Wellington boots for muck shifting and slippers by the fire, so shoes for cyclists differ.

The sprinter forcing the last few ounces of strength from his legs would not be happy with anything but a skin-tight shoe. The tourist walking through a cathedral town after climbing a long hill fully-loaded would be thoroughly unhappy without a heel, and a shoe loose enough to take a thick-soled sock.

Two pairs for a start, not a bad idea, since leather, like human beings, likes a rest. Thus two pairs will last more than twice as long