

GET A GRIP

August 2016 // Cyclocross // Tech Tips & Info

Today's cyclocross racers focus time and energy on getting their bike handling skills up to par. But what about their bike's handling skills? Having dialed traction is a guaranteed advantage over the competition.

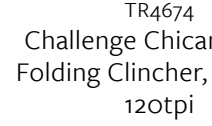
“What Cyclocross Tires Are You Running Today?”

It's one of the most commonly heard questions at every cyclocross race, and for good reason. Few things can affect the outcome of a cross race more than tire choice. If two riders on a muddy course are equally matched in their abilities, but one has file treads and the other has mud tires, it's pretty easy to predict who the victor will be.

For the most part, cyclocross tires can be grouped into three categories: file tread, mud, and all-condition.

File Tread

File treads are the perfect choice for a dry course with a lot of grass and dirt. File treads have a series of tight and extremely short knobs down the center of the tire. (Think about the metal file you have in the shop and you'll get the idea.) Many file treads, like the Clement LAS, feature shoulder knobs to give the rider a little extra traction while cornering. Since file treads are so condition-specific, and not a great choice for muddy courses, they may not be ideal for riders who have to choose one set of tires to ride all season. If riders have a second set of wheels or plan to switch out tires based on course conditions however, having file treads on hand is a great way to ensure that all of their bases are covered.



TR842
Michelin Cyclocross Jet S
Tire, 700x30

The Cyclocross Jet is a lightweight tire that excels in dry, fast, hardpacked conditions and also rolls smoothly on pavement.

[Buy Now](#)



TR4674
Challenge Chicane Tire:
Folding Clincher, 700x33,
120tpi

A versatile tire intended for dry, grassy, dusty or icy conditions.

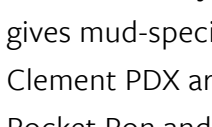
[Buy Now](#)



TR610
WTB Cross Boss

Tubeless compatible CX tire with a rounded, high volume profile. Center tread shelf provides smooth and fast acceleration while open side knobs clear mud.

[Buy Now](#)



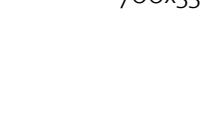
TR346
Clement LAS 700x33

Designed for fast, dry courses, with enough cornering tread to keep you upright through the corners.

[Buy Now](#)

Mud

Cyclocross and mud go together like peanut butter and jelly—and as it happens, it's not uncommon to feel like you're riding through peanut butter on many cross courses. For those conditions, a mud-specific tire is crucial to be able to even finish the race, much less have a chance at a podium spot. Mud tires feature very aggressive knobs along both the center tread and the shoulder of the tire. It's not just the size of the knobs that make them great in the mud, but also how widely spaced they are and how they're angled. The combination of these three things gives mud-specific tires superior mud-shedding abilities. While the Challenge Baby Limus and the Clement PDX are the two most commonly seen mud shedders, other models like the Schwalbe Rocket Ron and the Maxxis Mud Wrestler are also superb at throwing muck to the wind.



TR341
Clement PDX

Clement's classic tire can handle the worst slop, yet still rolls fast for the hard sections.

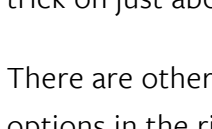
[Buy Now](#)



TR623
Maxxis Mud Wrestler
700x33

Fast rolling, ramped center knobs and aggressive side knobs create a perfection combination of speed, control and mud shedding.

[Buy Now](#)



TR4677
Challenge Baby Limus
700x33

The Challenge Limus sets the performance standard for grip and traction when the CX course gets really muddy.

[Buy Now](#)



TR5413
Schwalbe Rocket Ron
Liteskin 700x33

A great choice for muddy conditions. The Rocket Ron features an aggressive tread on a very lightweight casing.

[Buy Now](#)

All-Condition

With treads that aren't quite as minimalistic as a file tread and not as aggressive as a mud tire, all-condition tires are the perfect choice for someone who is looking for one tire to ride all season. All-condition tires feature a center tread of knobs that are spaced similarly to a mud tire but aren't as tall, so as to minimize the amount of rolling resistance on grass, pavement, and packed dirt. Larger and more spaced-out knobs line the shoulder of the tire to aid in cornering and provide a bit of mud shedding. Look to the Challenge Grifo, the Continental Cyclo XKing, the Schwalbe Racing Ralph, and the Vredestein Black Panther for an all-around tire that will do the trick on just about any cyclocross course.

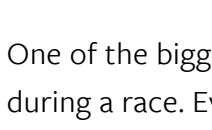
There are other tires that don't quite fit into any of the above categories but are still great options in the right conditions. The Surly Knard tread, for example, while not technically a file tread carries all the same advantages as a file tread with slightly larger footprint.



TR8241
Michelin Cyclocross Mud
2 Tire 700x30

The Mud 2 is an all condition tire that excels in loose conditions and provides great traction for front and rear use.

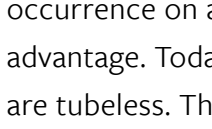
[Buy Now](#)



TR4430
Challenge Grifo 700x33

If you're going to have just one tire for CX season, the Challenge Grifo is the tire that will handle it all.

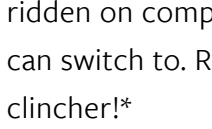
[Buy Now](#)



TR0401
Continental Cyclo X-King
700x32

Thanks to a smooth 180 tpi nylon carcass and the latest BlackChili rubber compound, this tire guarantees outstanding performance on all sorts of surfaces.

[Buy Now](#)



TR0575
Vredestein Black Panther
700x33

The five-row tread alignment and staggered angled knobs offer a great balance of low rolling resistance and great stability.

[Buy Now](#)



TR0095
Surly Knard 700x41

The best all-around high-volume 700c tires on the market that roll fast, corner like they're on rails and shed mud and grit.

[Buy Now](#)

The Star Of The Show

The star of a rider's bike during any cyclocross race is without a doubt the tubular tire. Several of the aforementioned tire treads are available in a couple of forms—clincher or tubular. Considered the gold standard for decades by many cyclocross racers, tubulars offer many advantages over clinchers.

Low Pressure In A High-Pressure Situation

One of the biggest advantages that tubulars offer is the ability to safely run low tire pressures during a race. Even bigger than that, though, is being able to better dial in your tire pressure for different race conditions. Dry and fast course? Pump them up (not too much of course). Wet and muddy? Drop them as low as you feel comfortable riding. Having a low pressure in muddy and unsure conditions decreases the chances of the bike sliding out, particularly while cornering.

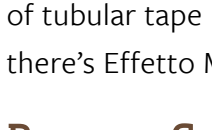
Flats? What Are Those?

We've all had at least one in our life—the dreaded pinch flat. Pinch flats happen if the pressure in a tire is too low and you roll over something hard, like a root or a rock. Since this is an inevitable occurrence on any cyclocross course, anything to ward off that nasty pinch flat is a welcomed advantage. Today, there are two different types of tubulars: those with latex tubes and those that are tubeless. The latter are the most effective at deterring flats, since there is no actual tube to pinch. While tubulars with a latex tube can fall victim to pinches, it is definitely rare. Additionally, tubulars have removable valve cores, meaning that a rider can throw some sealant into the latex tube. In the rare case of a pinch, the sealant will work its magic, allowing the rider to continue on.

Ride It Out

In the very rare case that a tubular goes flat and sealant doesn't help (gashes in the sidewall are far beyond what sealant is capable of), tubulars offer still another benefit. Tubulars can safely be ridden on completely flat. This is a huge benefit to riders who have a set of pit wheels that they can switch to. Ride to the pit, make the switch, and continue on to the finish. Try doing that on a clincher!*

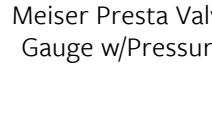
*Please don't try this on a clincher. It's not safe.



TL156
Brush Research 1/2" Acid
Brushes box/144

Use the right tool for applying tubular cement: these brushes have stood the test of time and make your gluing job easier.

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RC3402
Vittoria Mastik One
Professional Tubular
Cement

Classic tubular cement that has proven that it will hold strong through the toughest cross seasons.

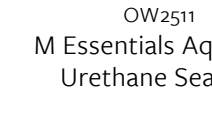
[Buy Now](#)



RS7000
CX Tape Tubular Tape

Designed to be used in conjunction with tubular cement for dual layer adhesion and ultimate grip.

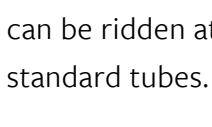
[Buy Now](#)



RC4000
Challenge Tubular Rim
Cement 12 pack 25g tubes

Classic rim cement that will keep your tubulars secured through all of your CX races.

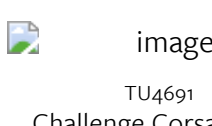
[Buy Now](#)



RC9204
Continental Cement for
Carbon Rims

Specially formulated to provide a stronger adhesion on carbon rims.

[Buy Now](#)



RF1205
Velox Janxet Tubular Tape

Combine with tubular cement for all season adhesion no matter what the conditions.

[Buy Now](#)

The Supporting Cast

The star of a show is nothing without a great supporting cast and the same is true of tubulars. There are several key accessories to make mounting, racing, and maintaining them much easier.

Adhesives

A tubular needs to be properly affixed to the rim before being ridden. This is a must. There are a couple of different methods of accomplishing this, but the most traditional and most common way is good old-fashioned tubular glue. Vittoria Mastik One, Challenge Rim Cement, and Continental Rim Cement are the go-to tubular adhesives for most riders and mechanics. The gluing process can seem daunting to someone who's new to it, but with a good set of acid brushes, some nitrile gloves, and plenty of time and patience, it's actually much less of a hassle than it first appears. For an extra-secure bond, many people combine traditional glues with a layer of tubular tape like Velox Janxet tubular tape. For those in need of more timely mounting method, there's Effetto Mariposa Carogna tubular gluing tape.

Pressure Gauges

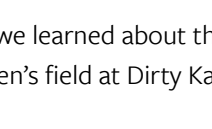
Since one of the major advantages of tubulars is the ability to run lower tire pressures, getting that pressure dialed in for the course is crucial. Low pressure gauges from SKS, and Meiser make this much easier to do than a standard floor pump.



PJ1301
Meiser Presta Valve 60psi
Gauge w/Pressure Relief

Meiser accuracy, with a pressure relief valve to get your tires just how you like them.

[Buy Now](#)



PJ4000
SKS Airchecker Digital
Display Pressure Gauge

Digital accuracy will let you tune your PSI for any cross conditions.

[Buy Now](#)

Sealants

As mentioned earlier, sealants are a great way to ward off pinch flats. Simply pour some in via the removable valve core and you're good to go. Other products, like M Essentials Aquaseal Urethane Sealant, protect a tubular's cotton-cased sidewall from the elements, ensuring they'll last through an entire muddy season.



OW151
M Essentials Aquaseal
Urethane Sealant

Essential equipment to weatherproof the untreated sidewalls of tubular tires.

[Buy Now](#)

Latex Tubes

If someone is still unsure about making the switch to tubulars after hearing the benefits they offer, suggest they try using a latex tube with their clinchers. Both Challenge and Vittoria make latex tubes that offer some—but not all—of the benefits of tubulars. They're extremely supple, can be ridden at slightly lower pressures, and are less susceptible to pinch flats compared to standard tubes.

TU3408
Vittoria Latex Tube

Provides a more supple feel than butyl tubes and features a 51mm valve w/removable core.

[Buy Now](#)

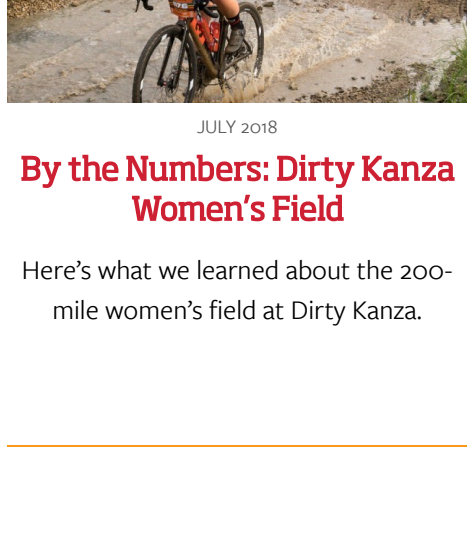
TU4691
Challenge Corsa Latex
Tube

Seamless latex construction with 47mm valve w/removable core.

[Buy Now](#)

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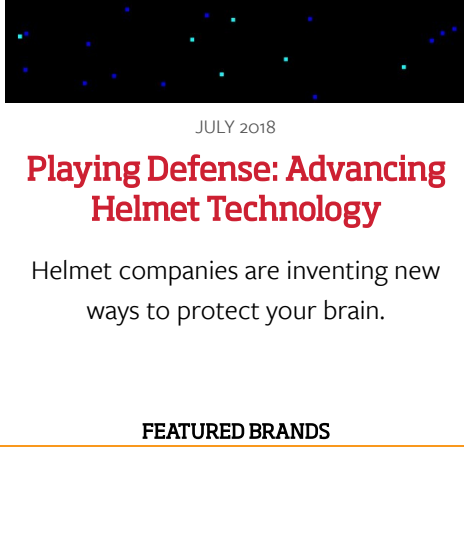
TECH TIPS & INFO



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Do you have what it takes to join the ranks of riders ditching their gears to race singlespeed cyclocross? Learn the ins and outs of how to get started.

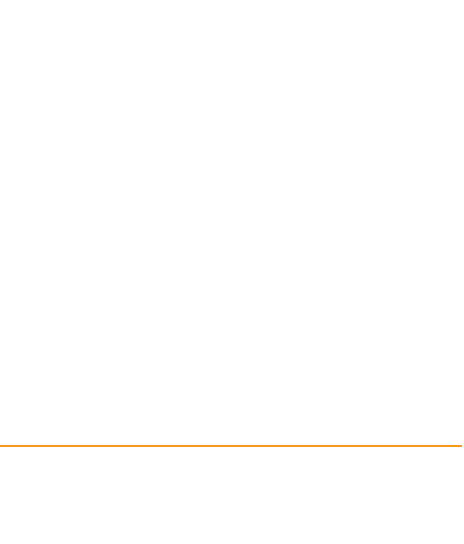
EXPLORING THE INDUSTRY



Crossing The Line

Cyclocross has grown from road cycling's "weird cousin" to its own strong category in the industry. There are a number of ways to get your shop in on the action.

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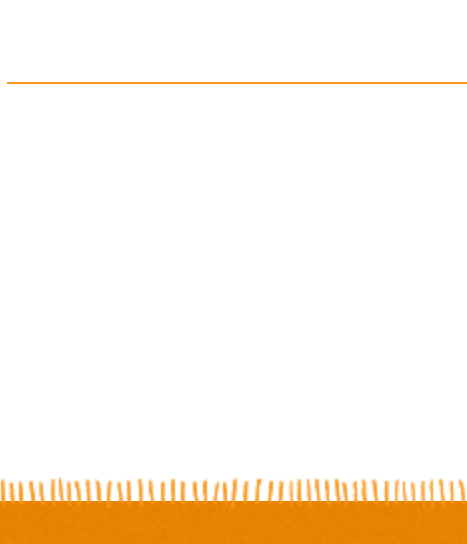


A Total Pit

Having a solid mechanic and pit setup for a cyclocross race is not just a luxury; it can be the difference between finishing a race and grinding your bike and components into complete oblivion.

This Month in Call Up

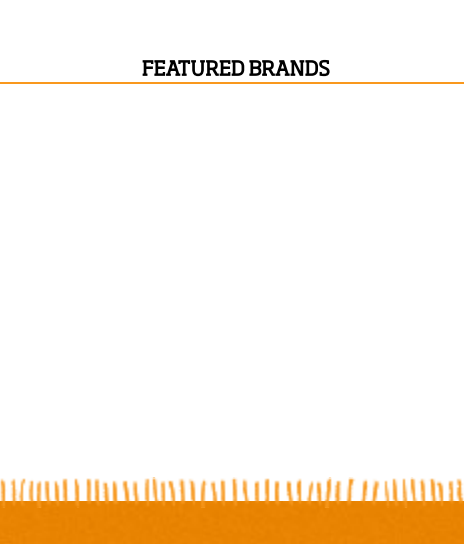
EXPLORING THE INDUSTRY



By the Numbers: Dirty Kanza Women's Field

Here's what we learned about the 200-mile women's field at Dirty Kanza.

TECH TIPS & INFO



Playing Defense: Advancing Helmet Technology

Helmet companies are inventing new ways to protect your brain.

EXPLORE CALL UP

QBP ADVOCACY

BY CATEGORY

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Bikepacking/Touring
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Gravel
Internship
Mountain
Multisport/Triathlon
Road
Service & Repair
Winter Riding

BY ARTICLE TYPE

BY ISSUE