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Review: FLO Cycling 30 Wheelset

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Apr 27, 2013  29,365

FLO Cycling (flocycling) is an amazing company. In the past two years, they've built a solid brand and following, carving themselves a niche by releasing intelligent, well-engineered products and offering them at unprecedented low prices. They've been so successful that they've been unable to keep any inventory in stock. Every single FLO wheel ever manufactured has been pre-sold. Their last batch of wheels was sold out in just twelve minutes. This year, they increased their production capacity by 200%, but it still wasn't enough to keep up with demand. FLO is doing things right, and that's reflected in their rabid customer base.

But despite their incredible success, FLO isn't merely kicking back and resting on their laurels. They're actively developing new products to expand and flesh out their product line. The latest offering from FLO is the new 30, a shallower wheelset meant for training, road racing, and generally as an all-around wheel that will take anything you can throw at it. Unlike the 60, 90, and Disc wheels that FLO offers, the new 30 is all aluminum, with no fairing. It's meant to be an incredibly robust, durable product. Moreover, because the entire rim is structural, the nipples aren't hidden within a fairing. So the wheel can be trued without removing the tire. That's a nice benefit over the other products in the FLO lineup, and another reason to use the 30 as your primary training wheel over the 60/90/Disc lineup, whose internal nipples require removing your tire to true.

Like everything in the FLO lineup, the 30 has been engineered by FLO founders (and twin brothers) Chris and Jon Thornham. They have done extensive CFD analysis to refine the aerodynamic shape of their rims, and settled on a wide-rim design very much in line with other offerings coming out from top wheel manufacturers across the board. Although this will appeal to many primarily as a training wheel, it's an undeniably fast design that will save significant time over a standard box-section rim. Compared to the



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The FLO 30 is a versatile training and racing wheel sure to impress.

other hoops in FLO's lineup, the 30 would even make a great race-day choice for a hill climb event (it's significantly lighter than the 60, 90, and Disc), or on a day when strong cross winds might have you concerned about your ability to handle the bike.



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Angled brake track; wide toroidal shape; the FLO 30 checks all the boxes.

But the 30 is positioned a little more as a training wheel, and that's truly where it shines. Because it's been designed to work in tandem with the rest of FLO's wheels, it's been given a rim width virtually identical to the other rims in the lineup. I say virtually identical, because although the FLO 60, 90, and Disc all have 24.4mm brake tracks that are parallel down the braking surface, the FLO 30's brake surface is angled. It goes from 24.0mm at the top to 25.8mm at the bottom. So if you ride with your brake pads REALLY close to the rim, you may need to make an adjustment to fit the FLO 30's properly. But most likely, you won't have to do a thing. You just swap one for the other, and not touch your brakes at all. That's what will make the FLO 30's irresistible to existing FLO customers. Both the braking surface and the rim width are essentially identical to FLO's other wheels, meaning that a swap from race wheels to training wheels won't require a single adjustment to the brakes.

Moreover, wide-section wheels are becoming popular for reasons other than their aerodynamics. People who fret about contact patches of tires will tell you that wider patches lead to better handling, regardless of tire width. And you can use bigger tires on wide rims with no aero penalty, which also improves handling. Tires are generally easier to install on wider rims, and if you pick the right tire/rim combination, you may even be able to install them without a tire lever. I picked a cheap set of tires from Performance Bike, and sadly had to resort to a lever to get them on. But I'm willing to bet that a Zipp Tangente clincher would go on without one (they do on Zipp's own Firecrest hoops).

The FLO 30 is a beautiful wheel that lives up to its promise. It is stiff, handles beautifully, is built like a tank, and fits perfectly in the FLO lineup. If you own any of FLO's other wheels, picking these up is a no-brainer. And even if you don't, these are likely a way better choice in training or road racing wheel than your standard box-section rim. At \$498 for the pair, it's harder to find a better deal anywhere. Like all of FLO's products, the only drawbacks are weight, and of course, availability. At 1585g for the pair, the FLO 30 set is about 400g lighter than my 60/90 combo, but still heavier than most anything at a comparable rim depth. But that's not why you're looking at FLO wheels. You're looking at them because they're probably the fastest hoops you'll ever find for the insane prices they sell for. And that's why they're constantly sold out. Kudos to FLO for another bang-up product.

Pros

- Bombproof wheel with good aero design
- Swap with other FLO wheels and not touch your brakes
- Easy-maintenance design

Cons

- On the heavy side

FLO delivers another knockout



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It's been a long road for FLO Cycling, but their wheels have finally hit the production line, and the finished product is going to wow a lot of athletes.



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FLO Cycling is changing the game with low-cost, high-tech wheels that deliver a lot of performance without breaking the bank.



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Last year, Mavic unveiled its new CXR aero platform, and is expanding it this year with new rim depths and clincher versions.



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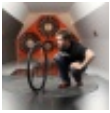
This Shiv is my personal ride, dressed to the nines and built with the finest gear in the sport. Enjoy the detailed writeup and supersized gallery.



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The Dash Gizelle Disc + Strike.9
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The boutique saddle maker from Boulder has a new seat on offer, as well as their first complete wheel, an 890-gram disc.



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"but still heavier than most anything at a comparable rim depth." What 30mm deep aluminum wide clinchers are lighter?

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Zipp 202, or any comparable carbon clinchers.

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\$1,900 price difference for less than 200 grams? Crazy! With an aluminum brake track a rider could make up the difference on the descent with better braking.

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Todd Hazalastnaim as with anything, there is a rate of diminishing returns as you approach higher and higher price points. To some, the premium on the 202's is worth it. To others like yourself, it's crazy. But in the grand scheme of things more options is ALWAYS a good thing for consumers. It forces competition and innovation, which results in superior products at better prices.

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Bob Villanueva · Top Commenter · Baltimore, Maryland

50 grams heavier than the Zipp 101 isn't a harsh penalty to pay for a wheel that is at least 1/3 the price.

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would they be good for cyclocross?

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Absolutely. These are built like a tank, and good for anything you want to throw at them.

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Kathy Prymas Horton

Nick Salazar ...know anything about Pacenti SL23's? In comparison to the FLO 30's?

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