

# Q&A



Avid's BB7 mechanical disc brake comes in two versions – road and mountain – with different cable pull

## [TECHNICAL] Discs for road

**Q** I have become a convert to disc brakes since buying a Specialized Epic MTB. I now want to convert my winter/wet bike (Airborne Cape Diem) to at least a front disc brake. I use Ultegra 9-speed STIs, which I want to retain. I'm considering Avid BB3 or BB5. Do you think there will be more choice in future?

My concern is brake cable pull. Some manufacturer literature states that their mechanical discs are only compatible with flat bar V-brake levers, suggesting to me that there could be an issue.  
**JOHN HINDS**

**A** It's true that most cable discs require the same long cable

pull (about 26mm) as a V-brake. But some models are designed to work with the short pull (only 13mm) of a road brake lever. Or sometimes the same model comes in two versions. Provided you make sure that you are getting a road-compatible model or version, there should be no problem. However this isn't easy in the case of Avid BB-whatever, where both versions have the same model number and are distinguished only by the word 'road' printed on the brake! Another clue is that the road version will usually have a much shorter arm for the cable to pull on.

Mistakes do happen. One well-regarded bicycle supplier didn't even have the model name excuse when they fitted Tektro Aquila instead of the road-type Lyra!

We may get more choice in road disc brakes – now that the UCI have allowed them for cyclo-cross usage – although since Tektro appear to have dropped Lyra, there presently seems to be less. So you're probably going Avid BB, where the word on the web forums is that it's worth trading up to BB7.

**CHRIS JUDEN**

## [TECHNICAL] Foot size & saddle height

**Q** Setting the saddle height by the heel-on-pedal method (Oct/Nov Cycle) possibly came about when the average man had a size eight shoe. The problem

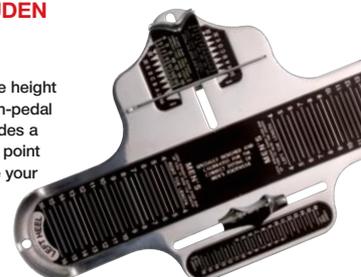
is that we have different lengths of feet. With a shorter foot, less extra length is obtained when moving to the ball of the foot, so the saddle will need to be lower. And with a size 11 foot, the saddle will need to be higher.  
**JOHN MONTGOMERY**

**A** Foot length can make a small difference. But longer feet tend to come on longer legs. And when a longer leg flexes at a certain angle, the distance from hip to heel also shortens by a proportionally greater amount. So the heel on pedal method actually works just as well (as a method for ensuring that the leg remains slightly flexed when pedalling with the ball of the foot) for short people with small feet as it does for tall folks with big feet – or for Mr Average, who still wears eights, by the way.

If, however, you're a tall person with small feet, or vice-versa, remember what I said about this being no more than a starting position, and that you should expect to make small adjustments until pedalling feels exactly right.

**CHRIS JUDEN**

Setting saddle height by the heel-on-pedal method provides a good starting point whatever size your feet are



## MEET THE EXPERTS



**CHRIS JUDEN**  
CTC Technical Officer  
and qualified engineer



**DR MATT BROOKS**  
Cycling GP



**PAUL KITSON**  
Partner at CTC's solicitors,  
Russell, Jones & Walker

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Send health and legal questions to the Editor (details on p78). We regret that Cycle magazine cannot answer unpublished health and legal queries. Technical and general enquiries, however, are a CTC membership service. Contact the CTC Information Office, tel: **0844 736 8450**, [cycling@ctc.org.uk](mailto:cycling@ctc.org.uk) (general enquiries) or Chris Juden, [technical@ctc.org.uk](mailto:technical@ctc.org.uk) (technical enquiries). You can also write to: CTC, Parklands, Railton Road, Guildford, GU2 9JX. And don't forget that CTC operates a free-to-members advice line for personal injury claims, tel: 0844 736 8452.

[HEALTH]

**Sitting comfortably**

**Q** I am 77 years of age and have recently had a water retention problem. The consultant has said I have an enlarged prostate and has put me on medication (Finasteride and Tamsulosin). This seems to be working and the medical consultant has said, following recent tests, that although I need to continue with the medication, he does not want to see me again, and that I can continue cycling. Naturally I am concerned that I do not inflame my prostate. Any advice or tips you can give me to reduce this risk will be appreciated.

JOHN PRESDEE

**A** The prostate is a walnut-size gland found in men, which lies beneath the bladder. The urethra, which is the tube carrying urine from the bladder to the penis, runs through it. The main function of the prostate is to produce fluid that protects and enriches sperm. Problems such as an enlarged prostate, known as benign prostatic hyperplasia (or BPH), and prostate cancer are common in older men. There does not seem to be a link between cycling and BPH or prostate cancer, but there is some suggestion that cycling may contribute to prostatitis (inflammation of the prostate) through pressure from the saddle.

Prostatitis is often due to infection. Symptoms can include pain in the perineal



Anatomic saddles reduce pressure on the perineal area, though you may need to try a few to see what suits you best

(saddle) area, pain on passing urine, increased frequency of urination and fever. Treatment usually involves several weeks of antibiotics. Some advocate that men should avoid cycling during episodes of prostatitis.

You can reduce pressure on the saddle area by wearing padded shorts, regularly standing on the pedals, and adjusting the position of your saddle (try tilting the nose down a little). Choosing a men's saddle with a central groove or depressed area may help, though it's worth trying a few if possible to see which suits you best.

If symptoms suggestive of prostatitis do occur, you should seek medical attention. Time off the bike may be necessary to allow a full recovery.

**DR MATT BROOKS**



[LEGAL]

**Insurer says nay**

**Q** I was pushing my cycle up a steep-sided lane when a horse rider approached. I climbed up the embankment and held my cycle in front of me. The rider thanked me. As the horse was almost past me, it reared on its hind legs, threw the rider off and then kicked my cycle. The rider re-mounted twice more and the horse reared and threw the rider off. When informed that the cycle was a write off, the rider referred the matter to his insurer. The insurer informs me that the horse could not be blamed and that the rider was not negligent. Local enquiries have revealed that the horse and rider have a reputation for 'spooky' incidents.  
**BILL BARTON**

The Animals Act 1971 is badly drafted, which makes it hard to prove that an animal's owner is liable



**A** Claims involving animals are notoriously difficult. The law is governed by a badly drafted and poorly understood piece of legislation, The Animals Act 1971.

Under Section 2 of the Act: 'Where damage has been caused by an animal which is not a dangerous species (this would include horses and dogs) a keeper of the animal is liable for the damage caused only if it can be established that:

- a) the damage is of a kind which the animal, unless restrained, was likely to cause or which, if caused by the animal, was likely to be severe; and
- b) the likelihood of the damage or of its being severe was due to the



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characteristics of the animal which are not normally found in animals of the same species or are not normally so found except at particular times or in particular circumstances; and

c) those characteristics were known to that keeper or were at any time known to a person who had at that time had charge of the animal as that keeper's servant or where that keeper is the head of a household were known to another keeper of the animal who is a member of that household and under the age of 16.'

As I say, this is an extremely poorly drafted piece of legislation! On the facts of the case in hand, there cannot be any allegations that the horse had been ridden negligently. If, for example, the rider was galloping along a narrow lane and collided with another road user, then it could of course be said that he was riding his horse negligently. But that does not apply here. To pursue a claim, Mr Barton would have to rely on the Animals Act.

It would need to be proved that the horse had a propensity to bolt or to move other than directed by its rider. Mr Barton indicates that his claim against the insurers has

been rejected and (in the unedited version of his query) that they have referred to a Court of Appeal ruling.

It is likely that the insurers are relying on a Court of Appeal case called *Clark v Bowlit*. In that case, Mr Clark was driving along a main road and in the same direction as a horse being ridden by Keren Bowlit, who was on a narrow grass verge. Mr Clark slowed his vehicle as he passed the horse but, as he was passing it, the horse moved into the road and collided with the front nearside of the car. Clark sued Bowlit for negligence and also under the Animals Act, and Bowlit counter-claimed against Clark alleging negligence.

At first instance, the trial Judge found that neither party had been negligent but that Mr Clark's claim succeeded under the Animals Act. The Court of Appeal, however, reversed that decision. The claim failed essentially because the horse owner or keeper was able to demonstrate that this was a one-off incident.

In relation to Mr Barton's case, it is likely that he would only be able to establish liability under the Animals Act if it can be proved that the horse in question had bolted on previous occasions.

**PAUL KITSON**

**Above** Horses sometimes spook easily. Alert the rider to your presence by calling out, then give horse and rider a wide berth. Don't overtake closely or at speed

**Right** The B&M Seculite-Plus is small and light enough to mount on a rear mudguard, and it includes a standlight

#### [ TECHNICAL ]

#### MUDGUARD REAR LAMP

**Q** I've just updated my front lamp to a B&M IQ Cyo, which works wonderfully. I noticed the lamp has a two-wire take-off for a rear light. The Schmidt generator produces 3W and the Cyo only takes 2.4, so I guess there's 0.6W going spare.

My SKS mudguards (age unknown) have an as-new-condition rear light built in. It seems a pity not to use it. I'm sure I could use the lamp with a normal bulb though I've no idea what bulb I need.

My question: can I fit a LED 'bulb' in there? What would you recommend?

**MICK SIMMONS**

**A** You can get a 6V 0.1A bulb to screw into there, but I wouldn't bother since it's a poor lamp by any standard. I don't know if anyone still makes an appropriate LED bulb, but I guess not, because ready-made LED dynamo rear lamps are so much better in every way.

My recommendation is to get a B&M Seculite-Plus. It's a darned good lamp with a standlight facility, which means it also stores enough juice to stay on for at least four minutes when you stop.

**CHRIS JUDEN**

