

YOUR TESTER SAYS...



As the owner of large big toes, I appreciate the extra room provided in the toe box of Northwaves, and the same can be said of the generous forefoot width. They're super reliable, taking a battering that would kill lesser shoes, and we'll be kicking these bad boys around UK trails to see how they last. *Justin*



Northwave Rebel SBS £130

Pro-level performance at a price that's going to appeal

The Rebel from Northwave is the 2010 replacement for the WMB award-winning 2009 iteration, the Raptor. The Rebel uses a composite twin forefoot stud-compatible midsole, which fuses nylon and carbon fibre together to create a midsole that's stiffer than ordinary nylon though without the outright road shoe stiffness of top-end XC race shoes – this is essentially a high-performance mountain bike shoe that gives a slight nod to all-day wearability over outright power delivery.

The Rebel's manmade leather/nylon mesh upper shares the

same broad forefoot shape which impressed us last year, and the deep well-ventilated toe box will please riders who find other brands a bit pinchy up front.

We slid into them easily, cinching down the twin Velcro forefoot straps and clicking through the SBS buckle to lock it on our feet – the buckle works okay, but the Velcro lateral adjustment on the buckle strap can catch on the edges of the upper vamp. We'd prefer a one-piece instep cover with some adjustment capability on the instep anchor point, like Specialized and Sidi models.

Cleat socket depth is good, with no issues using either Shimano SPD or un-shimmed Crank Brothers cleats. Only available in black, they shrug off dirt and grime and look good ride after ride. These shoes have proved solid, reliable performers (like the old Raptors) and will remain in service on every kind of ride we do in 2010. *Justin*
www.northwave.com



"The Rebel fits big or wide feet better than most performance shoes."

ALSO CONSIDER...

Lake MX225 £89



A versatile three-season bike shoe. Triple Velcro straps for a full adjustable fit and a Vibram rubber outsole for off-bike traction. www.moorelarge.co.uk



Shimano M182n £99



A classy all-rounder that takes the M310's racey fit and blends a nylon midsole with a carbon cleat plate for extra stiffness. www.madison.co.uk

Specialized BG Expert £110



One of the best full carbon midsole shoes we've ridden, with bombproof construction. www.specialized.com