

Northwave Core Bib-shorts - 10/12/08 (Rich Land)



When you first explain this product to people the reaction is split, some get it while others give that confused look. The reason for that is these are no ordinary bib-short as they are thermal lined. Yes I said bib-short and not bib-tight. It may sound strange and I am sure that the question is going through your head why?

Slowly we are seeing the emergence of the Roubaix bib-short. I am aware of three Brands that are selling this product at the moment, Northwave, Santini and Hincapie Sports (although I couldn't find it on their website but I have seen them). I am sure there are a few more companies producing them for sale, but nearly all clothing manufacturers make a thermal short for the PRO Teams to use.

Steve Baker from Hincapie Sports said, "George likes the Roubaix Shorts in the cold weather because he likes to wear leg warmers and shorts instead of tights. With the warmer Super Roubaix material, he can wear leg warmers with these shorts and it makes the outfit like full length tights."

Bib-shorts when paired with a (non padded) bib-tight offer the frequent rider (or daily commuter) an option to wear the outer for a couple of days, while the inner short can be changed at the end of the day. This solution can be fine for the non-high intensity cut and thrust of the normal grind. But when a higher pace needs to be adopted either for racing (Cross instantly comes to mind) or some cheeky Winter interval training,

opting for the less bulky Core bib-short offers a great balance between warmth and comfort.

The most popular items in my cycling wardrobe are those that offer me the most flexibility in more situations that I can wear them. I have both æ bib-shorts and padded bib-tights, which both see service throughout the year, but never as much as a pair of bib-shorts paired with either knee or leg warmers. The only problem is that the none thermal area can feel cold, causing the body to use more energy to heat itself, rather than use it for pedaling. I have used the Core bib-short from twelve to zero degrees (plus wind-chill) and found them to work fantastically keeping the rider as snug as a bug, but never over heating.

The bib shorts in question use what is called Lombardi fabric, which is similar in weight to standard Roubaix (and not the heavier Super Roubaix). The back is left open using a mesh fabric, so allowing better moisture management. The chamois used in the Northwave short is a well padded affair, which means it works just as well on long road rides as it does on a mountain bike.

The fit has been excellent with the hem of the short roughly 6 inches above the kneecap, so fans of the Sean Yates look may find them long. The material offers good stretch in all directions and meant I had to go for a size down, so the adage 'try before you buy' is well applied here. I have loved using these shorts and regularly hunt through the washing pile to find them. This in itself is a good testament to how quickly they have become a firm friend.

If you venture out in winter to rack up the miles or you compete in Cyclocross, you should consider adding a pair of these to your collection. At 54.99 these are an absolute steal and I can't recommend them highly enough.

Written by Rich Land - 10/12/08