

The Equity Cycling Shoe

A Research Document

Michael Webber

Special Topics: Footwear Design

Instructor: Aric Armon

IND 499-01

Academy of Art University

San Francisco, CA

October 23, 2021

Index	2
Concept & Objective	3
Background – Technological History	4
Background – Physiological/Anatomical	6
Background – Gender Specifics	8
Inspiration – Marianne Vos	10
Validation – Surveys & Interviews	16
Interview Johnny May	19
Interview Mary Robbins	27
Interview Julie Bates	33
Interview Amber & Kris Auer	39
Innovation Plan – Universally Specific (W.I.P.)	47
Construction & Materials Plan – Prototype (W.I.P.)	48
In Summary	49
References, Resources, & Citations	50

Concept & Objective

Design a shoe that demonstrates an aesthetic and physiological appeal for cyclists with substantial and significant input and feedback from *and* for female cyclists in order to bring greater awareness to the existence of inequalities in the sport in the hopes to diminish existing disparities. (With the larger intention of elevating the sport's female participants esteem and attitude as a reflection of diminishing gender inequities in all aspects of life in order to elevate esteem and attitude of all participants.)

...and to answer the questions:

- ➔ Should a women's specific cycling shoe exist?
- ➔ Can a shoe effect social change?

Background – Technological History

Original cycling shoes were common daily footwear similar to other athletic pursuits of the late nineteenth and early 20th centuries. Largely either Oxfords or Brogues, and eventual adaptations of this similar style. (Image 01)

The need for pedal engagement developed (this engagement is the heart of footwear for bicycles). Pedals technology advanced and toe clips were introduced (Image 02, 03); shoes that directly interfaced with these toe clips soon followed. This system frequently presented the challenge of disengaging the foot/leg from the bicycle pedal. Locking the foot into the pedal system was a commitment that most cyclists—especially competitive ones—accepted. (Image 04)

Until the French company *Look* developed the first mass produced clipless pedal system around 1984 (Image 05)—similar to a system *Cinelli* developed a decade before that did not take off due to even greater challenges of foot release.

Others soon followed due to the immense performance advantages of being mechanically attached to the pedal and having the ability to apply pedal force with limited discomfort, risk of slipping off, and most importantly increased power transfer.

Copious iterations and innovations have occurred in the decades since with those innovations significantly bleeding into footwear (Image 06 - 09). These innovations included advancements in light weight materials, material stiffness, adjustability in both shoe comfort and pedal release and cleat float.

Companies like *Specialized* and others began truly studying the foot and ergonomics of pedal/shoe dynamics to the conclusion that gender differences of the foot is minimal to non-existent regarding bicycle power transmission dynamics. (Contrary to data collected touching on non-bicycle footwear dynamics (Wunderlich)).



Image 01: Bicycling equipment catalog page from the 1950's



Image 02: Modern, reissue of vintage styled cycling shoe within typical toe clip.



Image 03: Fascinating that this style quill pedal are still popular and in full-on reputable production; the MKS Sylvan Road Pedal with iconic Christophe leather straps and MKS steel clips.



Image 04: Vintage SIDI cycling shoes with toe clip/quill pedal engagement plate that was found beneficial for competitive advantages..



Image 07: Lake just being one of virtually every cycling shoe brand including a BOA closure and adjustment dial on their shoe offerings.



Image 05: LOOK PP76 Carbon pedals from the '80's



Image 08: SIDI's evolution sometimes included snake-skin for upper materials



Image 06: Adidas Eddy Merckx Challenge Cycling Shoes



Image 09: Specialized S-Works high grade carbon sole with cleat mounts and ventilation

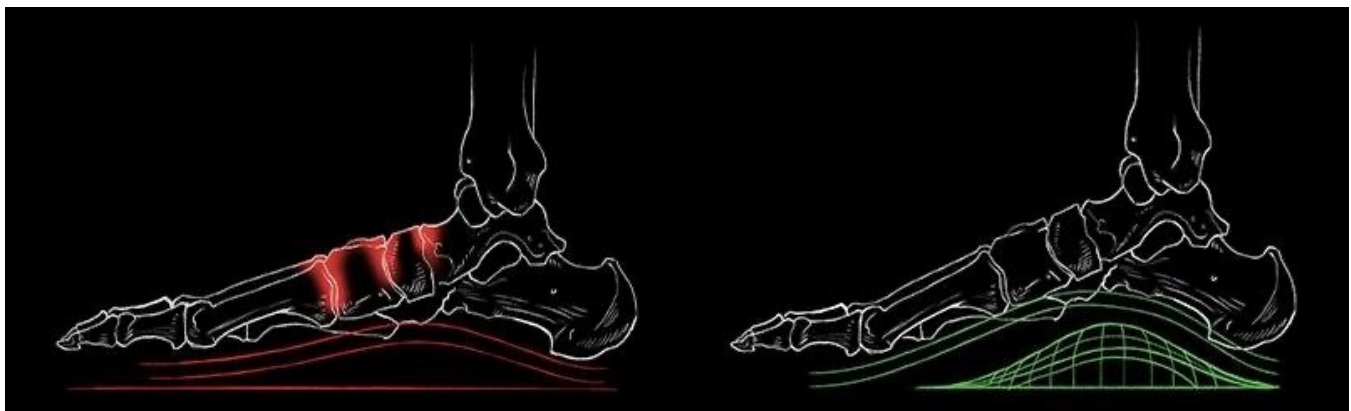
Background – Physiological/Anatomical

The foot is utilized differently while riding a bicycle in comparison to most other physical activities like (standing, walking, running, etc). This is why most cycling shoes are designed with a hard and stiff sole—to prevent unwanted flexibility in the foot throughout the pedal/crank rotation for propulsion and power transfer.

As described from one of the interviews outlined below, regarding the stiffness of the sole:

...the proprioception prevents the brain from understanding what the foot is doing [while riding] because it's not a gait cycle, it's not walking or running

This therefore requires some support in the arch to let the brain know that the foot is present and can work. From the majority of foot complaints, the majority cited lacking arch support and "flat feet" that can be visualized in the following graphic. This complaint of pain and discomfort can be alleviated by a properly supported arch.



Various brands of stock and aftermarket cycling shoe insoles/footbeds (top | bottom)

Paying attention to shoe width and specifically toe box width and shape will be important as these are other critical locations of complaint. Also from the interviews and surveys, heel cup fit and support was also mentioned as an area of focus.

Key anatomical takeaways:

This lack of a gait cycle—no heel-strike, no toe-off motions—combined with the absence of body weight loading and landing does create opportunities for other unique to cycling injuries.

Arch support is a critical factor of foot comfort and health in a cycling shoe

Blood flow various problems and discomforts can arise when incorrect pressure or compression is applied to the nerves and veins of the foot (often localized between the first and second metatarsals)

Cleat placement is a variable that is often overlooked, or assumed correct, in many rider's fit when it may be contributing to issues

Cockpit positions (i.e. saddle height, saddle position fore/aft, pedal position laterally, etc) can contribute to specific injuries and discomforts in the foot as well

Foot swelling occurs during bicycle rides, and increases with increased time on the bike

Heel cup being too loose allows the heel rising out of the shoe and can cause Achilles tendon problem

Sole material and foot coverage being too stiff and/or too high up the lateral side of the shoe can cause pain on the fifth metatarsal

Toe box sizing being incorrect can contribute to bunions and/or numbness

Everyone's feet are different, therefore cycling shoes are challenging to make "uniform" to meet everyone's particular needs. This can sometimes be addressed by sticking with a specific brand that tends to have a smaller or larger toe box for example, but this itself can not be reliably trusted from one model year to another depending on the brand. (Auer, May).

Significant studies have been performed regarding gender differences in feet showing that "men and women were found to differ significantly in two calf, five ankle, and four foot shape variables," and that "demonstrates that female feet and legs are not simply scaled-down versions of male feet but rather differ in a number of shape characteristics, particularly at the arch, the lateral side of the foot, the first toe, and the ball of the foot." (Wunderlich)

However, from the perspective of two professional bicycle fit specialists, these differences are negligible in regards to bicycle shoe's comfort and performance (May, Bates). This perspective is also emphasized by the hundreds of thousands of examples of bicycle fit data collected by the bicycle component company *Specialized* and their *Body Geometry Fit* protocols:

...there was no differences between genders. There are just differences within genders.

Background – Gender Specifics

Like many aspects of life, there has been a theme of men conforming demands on women, and this was no less apparent in the early days of the bicycle's rise in popularity. Take this instance from the mid-1800's: *The mayor of Chattanooga, New York initiated a law banning bloomers as a "menace to the peace and good morals of the male residents of the city" and a group of men in Norwich swore an oath not to associate with any ladies in the bloomer costume.* (O'Malley) Bloomers in this context refers to the name given to the clothing that was adopted by women in order to more easily ride a bicycle. The bloomers, named after Amelia Bloomer, were effectively a pair of pants. Change can be slow to take affect.

Seminal figures throughout history have found freedom provided by the bicycle, the bicycle—as an invention—was key in the early women's liberation movement: as inspiringly put by the historical feminist by what they thing of bicycling:

...it has done more to emancipate women than anything else in the world. It gives women a feeling of freedom and self-reliance. I stand and rejoice every time I see a woman ride by on a wheel...the picture of free, untrammelled womanhood.
—Susan B Anthony

Returning to the tech history, throughout all this time spent on the pedal's and shoe's development, little thought or allowance was applied to the potential difference of gender with the foot and cycling shoes or pedals for that matter. When these differences began gaining more notice, some brands did attempt to develop product lines accommodating female riders. These early attempts at equity in equipment were largely viewed with the placating admonishment of "shrink it, and pink it" meaning most of these were not significantly addressing any specific gender requirements. This sentiment is aptly demonstrated in a Huffpost article and the quote:

"Why is it that so many items on sale for women in bike shops are pink, purple or floral? It is [more] important for women to have a bike that fits them well, but do we really need floral patterns?"

Despite the market not being strictly applied to them women spent \$2.3 billion on bicycles and bicycle related products in 2011. Over the years, many products marketed to women were not only "pinked & shrunk" but they were frequently reduced in performance benefit, while not always reflecting a reduced cost to the customer. As emphasized by a long-time male industry professional, just because a product is marketed to a women, doesn't mean it needs to be "dumbed down". Efforts need to be



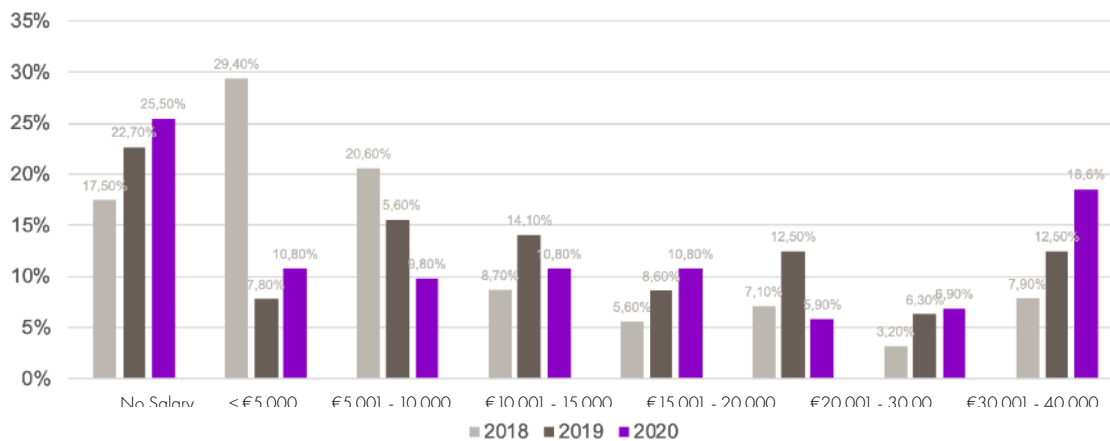
It is more than just sizing a product down and adding a splash of pink, it is also the exclusion of quality and technology that has so often been the case with women's specific cycling products, as if women wouldn't benefit from those upgrades

made despite a constraint of returns: even if thousands of a “male-focused” product will sell more than an equally high-end “female-focused” product, that doesn’t mean the company shouldn’t make any high-end female-focused products.

These differences in opportunity are found outside of bicycle retail sales and offerings, they are also evident in sport and competition. At the professional bicycle racing world, female identifying riders, many of them can cite copious examples of inequality compared to the experience of their male competitive counterparts. Some statistics:

- ➔ The number of riders required to reimburse their team for services essential to complete their job as a professional cyclist has decreased by 8% since 2019. However, **43% of riders** surveyed **reimbursed their team** for one or more of the following; equipment, mechanical service, medical costs and travel costs in 2020.
- ➔ Top end salaries in the Women’s WorldTour continue to rise above the fixed minimum gross annual salary of €15,000 (employed) and €24,600 (self-employed) with **only 25.5% earning more than €30,000**.
- ➔ Wage disparity is growing between the highest and lowest paid riders. Alarming, the number of professional riders receiving **zero salary** has increased from 17% in 2019 to **25% in 2020**.
- ➔ As no fixed minimum gross salary applies for the Continental teams we continue to see many riders earning **less than annual salary of €15,000 (32%)**
- ➔ **77%** of women’s professional competitors surveyed signed contracts **without any legal representation or advice**.
- ➔ **29%** of women’s professional competitive cyclist’s salary was **lost entirely or reduced** due to COVID-19
- ➔ **33%** of survey respondents have to **work a second job** while racing professionally

Statistics taken from The Cyclists’ Alliance Rider Survey 2020



(Slappendel)

Prize money disparities also exist between the sexes in similar competitions:

	Men (2020)	Women (2020)
➔ Road - World Tour (One Day Race)	€7,706	€1,574
➔ Road - World Tour (Stage)	€3,708	€753

In appreciated fairness, when it comes to World Championships, the payout is equal:

➔ Road - World Champs (Individual)	€8,204	€8,204
------------------------------------	--------	--------

Prize Money in Sport - BBC Sport Study (Ditchfield)

Inspiration – Marianne Vos

The winningest female cyclist in history, her method of advocacy is her inspiring persistence in racing seemingly everything possible.

Full name: Marianne Vos

Born: 13 May, 1987 (age 34)

Location: 's-Hertogenbosch, Netherlands

Nickname: The Cannibal

Height: 1.68 m (5 ft 6 in)

Weight: 58 kg (128 lb)

Shoe Size: 38



Marianne's Olympic Gold Shoes

“Women’s cycling is great, it is beautiful.”

One of only approximately 400 inhabitants, Marianne Vos currently lives in the single street Dutch village of Babyloniënbroek; born only 25km way 's-Hertogenbosch, Vos' perhaps limited appearing domesticity has been wholly countermanded by worldwide travel doing what she does best—racing a bicycle becoming the most decorated women's cyclist of all time (Nystrom).

She started her illustrious career when she was a mere six years old. She began training with her brother's team but because of her age, she was not allowed to participate in races yet; during the winter she started training in cyclo-cross (a specific category of bicycle race very popular in the Netherlands and Belgium).

Professionally she began at the age of 14 winning two Dutch national championships: the mountain bike national champion and the national junior road race champion. As these events are spread throughout the year, she finished in top positions in many other championship titles: second in the Dutch time trial championship for example. The following year she defended her mountain biking title.

In 2004, her pattern of winning continued. This year demonstrating her power on the bike in the mud and dirt of cyclocross winning her first international race as well as numerous podium positions in road races, time trials, other cyclocross victories, and a third successful defense of her junior mountain bike national championship. Topping the year off with becoming the junior road racing world championship at the age of seventeen.

Her list of palmares across the years is, needless to say, impressively long. Already a champion in multiple disciplines, Marianne Vos maintained this level of success throughout her career only taking a significant break in 2015 to recover from injury—only to return the following year and establish her reign again.



2012 Olympic Road Race Finish Line Victory

Vos has also been an advocate for women's equity and representation in cycling by pushing for and involving herself in the creation and continuation of new and mirrored competitive events such as La Course by Le Tour de France, Gird'Italia Donne, La Flèche Wallonne Féminine, and others, including the inaugural women's edition of the 118 year event Paris-Roubaix Femmes just this year for the first time.

“Thanks to my career I can push women's cycling forward, becoming an outspoken voice to push for bigger events, more racing days, and equal treatment.”

When resistance to independent race events by women is brought up, we need to really remind ourselves that there is little reason for the distinction and disparity. Most often that resistance is based in the assumption that women cannot perform or compete with the same energy and vigor that men cyclists do we just need to. As quoted by Tom Cory from the Telegraph, “...[Vos'] Olympic road race triumph in 2012, a race in which she broke British hearts by edging out Lizzie Armitstead in a classic rain-soaked dust-up on the Mall that betrayed the lie that women's racing was in any way less exciting than the men.”

Understanding this is a “concern” by some Marianne Vos acknowledges the challenge maturely and realistically. “Physically I'm sure we are able to do a three-week Tour riding up Mont Ventoux. The question is: do you want this as a race? It has to be worth it. It has to add value to the sport. We must take gradual steps, build firm foundations.” Referring to the amount of attention that women's cycling has received Vos understands that the talent base may still be too narrow and doing too much too soon could attract negative publicity. (Clemitson)

These questions and concerns are heartily addressed in a film Marianne Vos also had a part in creating, *Half the Road* (Bertine). Touching on these matters with a wide array of contemporary competitive cyclists, asking the big question as to why, why these hurdles to equity, promotion, and opportunity exist to women's cycling?

“I've often been told I couldn't do something, but then I'm always there, doing it.”

More quotes of motivation and inspiration:

“I'm an introverted person. To charge my batteries, I go out on my own. I train alone, I ride alone. It is not only the training, but that mental part that is really important for me on the bike. Just to organize my mind again and to get fresh and just **to find that energy and spirit** again.”

“I have always said, you can have your success but it is what you do with it and **how you continue that is more important than the success** on its own. And failure is definitely never fatal. It is also how you deal with it and how you come back after it.”

“I want to be motivational and inspirational for everybody: my big aim is **more women on bicycles.**”



Prepping for a Cobble Meal in the Inaugural Women's Paris-Roubaix 2021

Marianne Vos Career Racing Statistics (Palmares):

Road Racing2002

1st Road race, National Cadet Road Championships

2004

UCI Junior Road World Championships

1st Road race

5th Time trial

3rd Time trial, National Junior Road Championships

2005

1st Road race, National Junior Road Championships

1st Omloop van Borsele

2nd Road race, UCI Juniors World Championships

5th Ronde van Gelderland

2006

1st Road race, UCI Road World Championships

1st Road race, UEC European Under-23 Road Championships

1st Road race, National Road Championships

1st Overall Tour Féminin en Limousin

1st Points classification

1st Young rider classification

1st Stages 1 (ITT) & 3

1st Omloop van Borsele

1st Omloop van Valkenburg

1st Criterium Steenwijk

1st Draai van de Kaai

1st Criterium Oostvoorne

1st Criterium Pijnacker

2nd Overall Giro della Toscana Int. Femminile – Memorial Michela Fanini

1st Points classification

1st Young rider classification

1st Stage 1 (TTT)

2nd Holland Hills Classic

4th Overall Ster Zeeuwsche Eilanden

4th Overall Trophée d'Or Féminin

1st Stage 4

5th Overall Emakumeen Bira

1st Points classification

1st Young rider classification

1st Stage 1

6th Overall Gracia–Orlová

1st Stage 5

6th Ronde van Gelderland

7th Tour de Berne

2007

1st Overall UCI Women's Road World Cup

1st Road race, UEC European Under-23 Road Championships

1st Overall Giro di San Marino

1st Stages 1 (ITT), 2, 3 & 4

1st Overall Ster Zeeuwsche Eilanden

1st Stages 1 (ITT) & 2

1st La Flèche Wallonne Féminine

1st Rund um die Nürnberger Altstadt

1st Ronde van Gelderland

1st Omloop van Borsele

1st Holland Hills Classic

1st Stage 2 Giro Rosa

2nd Road race, UCI Road World Championships

2nd Road race, National Road Championships

2nd Overall Emakumeen Bira

1st Points classification

1st Stages 2 & 3

2nd Novilon Internationale Damesronde van Drenthe

2nd Tour de Berne

3rd Tour of Flanders for Women

3rd Ronde van Drenthe World Cup

4th Coupe du Monde Cycliste Féminine de Montréal

6th Overall Tour de l'Aude Cycliste Féminin

1st Stages 1, 3, 4 & 7

7th Overall Holland Ladies Tour

1st Points classification

1st Young rider classification

1st Stages 1 & 4

7th GP de Plouay – Bretagne

10th Open de Suède Vårgårda

2008

1st Road race, National Road Championships

1st Overall Gracia–Orlová

1st Points classification

1st Mountains classification

1st Stages 1, 2 & 3 (ITT)

1st Overall Vuelta a Occidente

1st Points classification

1st Young rider classification

1st Prologue, Stages 1 & 2 (ITT)

1st Overall Emakumeen Bira

1st Points classification

1st Stages 1, 2, 3 (ITT) & 4

1st Grand Prix de Dottignies

1st La Flèche Wallonne Féminine

1st GP de Santa Ana

2nd Road race, UCI Road World Championships

2nd Overall Vuelta Ciclista Femenina a El Salvador

1st Young rider classification

1st Stages 1, 2 & 3 (ITT)

2nd Ronde van Drenthe

3rd Overall Giro della Toscana Int. Femminile – Memorial Michela Fanini

1st Stage 2

3rd Omloop van Borsele

4th Overall Krasna Lipa Tour Féminine

1st Stages 2 & 3 (ITT)

4th Overall Holland Ladies Tour

1st Young rider classification

4th Rund um die Nürnberger Altstadt

5th Tour of Flanders for Women

6th Road race, Summer Olympics

9th Overall Giro del Trentino Alto Adige-Südtirol

2009

1st Overall UCI Women's Road World Cup

1st Road race, National Road Championships

1st Overall Holland Ladies Tour

1st Young rider classification

1st Trofeo Alfredo Binda-Comune di Cittiglio

1st Novilon Eurocup Ronde van Drenthe

1st La Flèche Wallonne Féminine

1st 7-Dorpenomloop Aalburg

1st Holland Hills Classic

1st Open de Suède Vårgårda

2nd Road race, UCI Road World Championships

2nd Overall Tour de Bretagne Féminin

1st Stages 3, 4 (ITT) & 5

2nd Overall Thüringen Rundfahrt der Frauen

1st Points classification

1st Young rider classification

1st Stage 1

2nd Omloop van Borsele

2nd Tour de Berne

2nd GP de Plouay – Bretagne

UEC European Under-23 Road Championships

3rd Road race

3rd Time trial

3rd Overall Grande Boucle Féminine Internationale

1st Stage 4

3rd Overall Tour de l'Aude Cycliste Féminin

1st Stages 4, 7 & 8

3rd Overall Gracia–Orlová

1st Stage 1

4th Overall Giro della Toscana Int. Femminile – Memorial Michela Fanini

1st Stages 4 (ITT) & 6

4th Ronde van Gelderland

6th Tour of Flanders for Women

6th Rund um die Nürnberger Altstadt

8th Ronde van Drenthe

2010

1st Overall UCI Women's Road World Cup

National Road Championships

1st Time trial

2nd Road race

1st Overall Gracia–Orlová

1st Stages 1, 4 & 5

1st Overall Holland Ladies Tour

1st Points classification

1st Stages 3 & 7

1st Trofeo Alfredo Binda-Comune di Cittiglio

1st 7-Dorpenomloop Aalburg

1st Emakumeen Saria

2nd Road race, UCI Road World Championships

2nd Tour of Flanders for Women

2nd GP de Plouay – Bretagne

3rd Open de Suède Vårgårda TTT

4th Overall Emakumeen Bira

1st Points classification

1st Stages 1 & 3b

4th Novilon Eurocup Ronde van Drenthe

4th Omloop van Borsele

4th GP Ciudad de Valladolid

6th Overall Ster Zeeuwsche Eilanden

6th Overall Giro della Toscana Int. Femminile – Memorial Michela Fanini

1st Stage 5

6th La Flèche Wallonne Féminine
 7th Overall Giro d'Italia Femminile
 1st Points classification
 1st Young rider classification
 1st Stages 5 & 6
 7th Overall La Route de France
 1st Stages 2 & 5
 8th Overall Tour de l'Aude Cycliste Féminin
 1st Points classification
 1st Young rider classification
 1st Stage 8

2011

National Road Championships
 1st Road race
 1st Time trial
 1st Overall Giro d'Italia Femminile
 1st Points classification
 1st Mountains classification
 1st Stages 1, 3, 6, 7 & 9
 1st Overall Emakumeen Bira
 1st Points classification
 1st Stages 1, 2 & 4
 1st Overall Ster Zeeuwsche Eilanden
 1st Stages 1 (ITT) & 3
 1st Overall Holland Ladies Tour
 1st Points classification
 1st Stages 1, 5, & 6
 1st Ronde van Drenthe
 1st Drentse 8
 1st 7-Dorpenomloop Aalburg
 1st Gooik–Geraardsbergen–Gooik
 1st La Flèche Wallonne Féminine
 1st Grand Prix Elsy Jacobs
 1st GP Ciudad de Valladolid
 1st Durango-Durango Emakumeen Saria
 UCI Road World Championships
 2nd Road race
 10th Time trial
 3rd Overall Energiewacht Tour
 1st Stages 1 & 4
 3rd Tour of Flanders for Women
 3rd Omloop van Borsele
 3rd GP de Plouay – Bretagne
 8th Overall Trophée d'Or Féminin
 1st Stage 4

2012

1st Road race, Summer Olympics
 1st Road race, UCI Road World Championships
 1st Overall UCI Women's Road World Cup
 1st Overall Giro Rosa
 1st Points classification
 1st Stages 1, 2 (ITT), 4, 7 & 8
 1st Overall Tour Féminin en Limousin
 1st Points classification
 1st Stages 1 & 4
 1st Overall Grand Prix Elsy Jacobs
 1st Points classification
 1st Stage 1
 1st Overall Holland Ladies Tour
 1st Sprints classification
 1st Stages 4 & 6
 1st Ronde van Drenthe
 1st Novilon Euregio Cup
 1st Trofeo Alfredo Binda-Comune di Cittiglio

1st GP de Plouay – Bretagne
 1st Amstel Curaçao Race
 2nd Road race, National Road Championships
 2nd La Flèche Wallonne Féminine
 2nd GP Comune di Cornaredo
 2nd Holland Hills Classic
 3rd Overall Energiewacht Tour
 Open de Suède Vårgårda
 3rd Team time trial
 3rd Road race
 5th GP Stad Roeselare

2013

UCI Road World Championships
 1st Road race
 2nd Team time trial
 1st Overall UCI Women's Road World Cup
 1st Overall Grand Prix Elsy Jacobs
 1st Points classification
 1st Stage 2
 1st Overall Trophée d'Or Féminin
 1st Stages 1, 2 & 4
 1st Tour of Flanders for Women
 1st La Flèche Wallonne Féminine
 1st Drentse 8 van Dwingeloo
 1st Ronde van Drenthe World Cup
 1st Durango-Durango Emakumeen Saria
 1st Open de Suède Vårgårda
 1st Road race
 2nd Team time trial
 1st GP de Plouay
 1st Profonde van Tiel
 1st Ridderronde Maastricht
 Giro della Toscana Int. Femminile – Memorial Michela Fanini
 1st Prologue, Stages 2 & 3
 2nd Road race, National Road Championships
 5th Overall Emakumeen Euskal Bira
 1st Points classification
 1st Stage 1
 5th Gooik–Geraardsbergen–Gooik
 6th Overall Giro d'Italia Femminile
 1st Points classification
 1st Stages 3, 4 & 7
 6th Trofeo Alfredo Binda-Comune di Cittiglio

2014

1st Overall Giro d'Italia Femminile
 1st Points classification
 1st Stages 1, 4, 5 & 7
 1st Overall The Women's Tour
 1st Points classification
 1st Stages 3, 4 & 5
 1st La Course by Le Tour de France
 1st 7-Dorpenomloop Aalburg
 1st Gooik–Geraardsbergen–Gooik
 1st Durango-Durango Emakumeen Saria
 1st Sparkassen Giro
 1st Stage 3 Holland Ladies Tour
 1st Stage 2 (TTT) Belgium Tour
 2nd Overall Festival Luxembourgeois du cyclisme féminin Elsy Jacobs
 1st Points classification
 1st Prologue & Stage 2
 2nd Overall Emakumeen Euskal Bira
 1st Points classification

1st Stages 2 & 4
 2nd Overall Ladies Tour of Norway
 1st Prologue & Stage 2
 Open de Suède Vårgårda
 2nd Team time trial
 4th Road race
 2nd GP de Plouay
 National Road Championships
 3rd Road race
 3rd Time trial
 6th La Flèche Wallonne Féminine
 10th Road race, UCI Road World Championships

2015

2nd Marianne Vos Classic
 6th Ronde van Gelderland

2016

1st Pajot Hills Classic
 1st 7-Dorpenomloop Aalburg
 1st Keukens Van Lommel Ladies Classic
 2nd Overall Belgium Tour
 1st Points classification
 1st Sprints classification
 1st Stage 2
 2nd Gran Premio Bruno Beghelli Internazionale Donne Elite
 3rd Road race, National Road Championships
 3rd La Course by Le Tour de France
 3rd Crescent Vårgårda UCI Women's WorldTour
 TTT
 4th Overall Tour of California
 1st Stage 3
 4th Overall The Women's Tour
 1st Points classification
 1st Stage 4
 4th Ronde van Gelderland
 4th Holland Hills Classic
 5th Overall Thüringen Rundfahrt der Frauen
 1st Stages 1, 3 & 5
 7th Road race, UEC European Road Championships
 9th Road race, Summer Olympics
 9th La Flèche Wallonne Féminine
 10th Overall Festival Luxembourgeois du cyclisme féminin Elsy Jacobs
 10th Acht van Westerveld

2017

1st Road race, UEC European Road Championships
 1st Overall BeNe Ladies Tour
 1st Points classification
 1st Sprints classification
 1st Stages 2b (ITT) & 3
 1st Overall Ladies Tour of Norway
 1st Points classification
 1st Trofee Maarten Wynants
 1st Gooik–Geraardsbergen–Gooik
 1st 7-Dorpenomloop Aalburg
 2nd Crescent Vårgårda UCI Women's WorldTour
 3rd Overall Belgium Tour
 1st Points classification
 1st Stage 1
 3rd Omloop van Borsele
 4th RideLondon Classique

7th Ronde van Drenthe

2018

1st Overall Ladies Tour of Norway
 1st Points classification
 1st Stages 1, 2 & 3
 1st Overall BeNe Ladies Tour
 1st Sprints classification
 1st Points classification
 1st Stage 1
 1st Postnord UCI WWT Vårgårda WestSweden
 Road race
 1st Stage 8 Giro Rosa
 2nd Road race, UEC European Road
 Championships
 2nd Overall The Women's Tour
 1st Points classification
 2nd RideLondon Classique
 2nd GP de Plouay – Bretagne
 3rd Road race, National Road Championships
 3rd Trofeo Alfredo Binda-Comune di Cittiglio
 3rd Brabantse Pijl Dames Gooik
 5th Ronde van Drenthe
 10th Amstel Gold Race

2019

1st Overall Women's Tour de Yorkshire
 1st Stage 2
 1st Overall Ladies Tour of Norway
 1st Stages 2, 3 & 4
 1st Overall Tour Cycliste Féminin International de
 l'Ardèche
 1st Points classification
 1st Stages 1, 2, 3, 6 & 7
 1st Trofeo Alfredo Binda-Comune di Cittiglio
 1st La Course by Le Tour de France
 Giro Rosa
 1st Stages 2, 3, 7 & 10
 1st Stage 2 The Women's Tour
 2nd Road race, European Games
 2nd Road race, National Road Championships
 2nd Postnord UCI WWT Vårgårda West Sweden
 3rd Amstel Gold Race
 3rd Tour of Guangxi
 4th La Flèche Wallonne Féminine
 6th Road race, UCI Road World Championships
 6th RideLondon Classique
 7th Strade Bianche Women
 10th Three Days of Bruges–De Panne

2020

Giro Rosa
 1st Points classification
 1st Stages 3, 5 & 6
 2nd La Course by Le Tour de France
 4th Road race, UCI Road World Championships
 4th Road race, National Road Championships
 4th Liège–Bastogne–Liège
 6th Strade Bianche Women
 8th Road race, UEC European Road
 Championships
 9th La Flèche Wallonne Féminine

2021

1st Gent–Wevelgem
 1st Amstel Gold Race

Giro Rosa
 1st Stages 3 & 7
 2nd Road race, UCI Road World Championships
 2nd Paris–Roubaix
 2nd Trofeo Alfredo Binda-Comune di Cittiglio
 3rd La Course by Le Tour de France
 4th Overall Holland Ladies Tour
 1st Points classification
 1st Prologue, Stages 4 & 5
 5th Road race, Summer Olympics
 6th Liège–Bastogne–Liège
 7th Strade Bianche Women

Cyclocross Racing

2002–2003

3rd National Championships

2003–2004

1st Veldrit Pijnacker
 2nd UEC European Championships
 3rd Duinencross Koksijde
 3rd Cyclo-cross Torino

2004–2005

2nd National Championships
 3rd Cyclo-cross Milan

2005–2006

1st UCI World Championships
 1st UEC European Championships
 UCI World Cup
 2nd Cyclo-cross Kalmthout
 2nd Veldrit Pijnacker
 2nd Cyclo-cross Milan
 2nd Cyclo-cross Liévin
 2nd National Championships

2006–2007

2nd Overall UCI World Cup
 1st Grand Prix Lago le Bandie
 2nd Cyclo-cross Kalmthout
 2nd Grand Prix Adrie van der Poel
 2nd National Championships
 3rd UEC European Championships

2007–2008

2nd UCI World Championships

2008–2009

1st UCI World Championships
 UCI World Cup
 1st Grand Prix Eric De Vlaeminck
 1st Overall Gazet van Antwerpen
 1st Sluifingsprijs Oostmalle
 2nd Krawatencross
 3rd Azencross
 2nd Frankfurter Rad-Cross
 2nd Scheldecross Antwerpen
 2nd Grand Prix du Nouvel-An

2009–2010

1st UCI World Championships
 1st UEC European Championships
 2nd Overall UCI World Cup
 1st Duinencross Koksijde

1st Grand Prix Eric De Vlaeminck
 1st Grand Prix Adrie van der Poel
 2nd Grand Prix Nommay
 2nd Cyclo-cross Kalmthout
 3rd Cyclo-cross Grand Prix Lille Métropole
 1st Overall Gazet van Antwerpen
 1st Sluifingsprijs Oostmalle
 2nd Azencross
 1st 35. Int. Radcross
 1st Grand Prix du Nouvel-An
 1st Cyclo-cross Sint-Michielsgestel
 1st Centrumcross Surhuisterveen
 2nd National Championships
 Superprestige
 2nd Cyclo-cross Gavere

2010–2011

1st UCI World Championships
 1st National Championships
 3rd Overall UCI World Cup
 1st Cyclo-cross Pontchâteau
 2nd Cyclo-cross Kalmthout
 2nd Grand Prix Eric De Vlaeminck
 3rd Grand Prix Adrie van der Poel
 Gazet van Antwerpen
 1st Azencross
 1st Grand Prix du Nouvel-An
 1st Cauberg Cyclo-cross
 2nd Scheldecross Antwerpen
 3rd Cyclocross Tervuren

2011–2012

1st UCI World Championships
 1st National Championships
 2nd Overall UCI World Cup
 1st Cyclo-cross Namur
 1st Grand Prix Eric De Vlaeminck
 1st Cyclo-cross Liévin
 1st Grand Prix Adrie van der Poel
 2nd Duinencross Koksijde
 Superprestige
 1st Superprestige Gieten
 1st Superprestige Diegem
 Gazet van Antwerpen
 1st Grand Prix Rouwmoer
 1st Azencross
 1st Krawatencross
 2nd Sluifingsprijs Oostmalle

2012–2013

1st UCI World Championships
 1st National Championships
 UCI World Cup
 1st Grand Prix Eric De Vlaeminck
 1st Memorial Romano Scotti
 1st Grand Prix Adrie van der Poel
 3rd Cyclo-cross Namur
 3rd Overall BPost Bank Trophy
 1st Krawatencross
 1st Grand Prix du Nouvel-An
 1st Centrumcross Surhuisterveen
 1st Nationale Cyclo-Cross Otegem
 1st Cyclocross Rucphen
 Superprestige
 2nd Superprestige Gieten

2013–2014

1st UCI World Championships
 1st National Championships
 3rd Overall UCI World Cup
 1st Cauberg Cyclo-cross
 1st Grand Prix Nommay
 2nd Cyclo-cross Namur
 2nd Grand Prix Eric De Vlaeminck
 2nd Memorial Romano Scotti
 BPost Bank Trophy
 1st Azencross
 2nd Grand Prix Sven Nys
 1st Grote Prijs van Brabant
 1st Nacht van Woerden
 1st Centrumcross Surhuisterveen
 1st Cyclocross Rucphen
 1st Cyclocross Leuven
 2nd Krawatencross

2014–2015

1st National Championships
 UCI World Cup
 1st Grand Prix Eric De Vlaeminck
 2nd Cyclo-cross Namur
 Superprestige
 1st Superprestige Diegem
 BPost Bank Trophy
 2nd Azencross
 1st Centrumcross Surhuisterveen
 3rd UCI World Championships

2016–2017

1st National Championships
 UCI World Cup
 1st Grand Prix Eric De Vlaeminck
 1st Memorial Romano Scotti
 1st Grand Prix Adrie van der Poel
 Superprestige
 1st Superprestige Diegem
 DW Trophy
 1st Grand Prix Sven Nys
 2nd Azencross
 Brico Cross
 1st Parkcross Maldegem
 1st Centrumcross Surhuisterveen
 2nd UCI World Championships

2017–2018

Brico Cross
 1st Parkcross Maldegem

2018–2019

1st Overall UCI World Cup
 1st World Cup Waterloo
 1st Cyclo-cross Bern
 1st Grand Prix Eric De Vlaeminck
 1st Cyclo-cross Pontchâteau
 2nd Cyclo-cross Namur
 3rd Grand Prix Adrie van der Poel
 Superprestige
 1st Cyclo-cross Ruddervoorde
 2nd Superprestige Gieten
 Brico Cross
 1st Hotondcross
 1st Kiremko Nacht van Woerden
 2nd UEC European Championships
 2nd National Championships
 3rd UCI World Championships

2019–2020

Ethias Cross
 1st Grand Prix Rouwmoer
 1st Ciclo-cross Ciudad de Xativa

2020–2021

Ethias Cross
 1st Grand Prix Rouwmoer
 3rd Zilvermeercross

2021–2022

UCI World Cup
 1st Waterloo
 1st Jingle Cross

Mountain Bike Racing

2002

1st National Junior Mountain Bike Championships

2003

1st National Junior Mountain Bike Championships

2004

1st National Junior Mountain Bike Championships

2005

1st National Junior Mountain Bike Championships
 UCI Junior Mountain Bike World Cup
 1st Houffalize
 1st MTB Cup Heeswijk

2013

1st Overall Afxentia Stage Race
 1st Stages 2 & 3
 MTB Topcompetitie
 1st Nieuwkuijk
 1st Norg
 1st Steenwijk
 1st Egmond-pier-Egmond
 1st Sea Otter Classic
 1st MTB Cup Heeswijk

2014

1st Egmond-pier-Egmond
 1st Sea Otter Classic

2015

MTB Topcompetitie
 1st Nieuwkuijk

Track Racking

2007

National Track Championships
 1st Points race
 1st Scratch race
 2nd Individual pursuit
 UCI Track Cycling World Cup Classics
 1st Points race, Beijing
 1st Scratch race, Beijing

2008

1st Points race, Olympic Games
 1st Points race, UCI Track World Championships
 UCI Track Cycling World Cup Classics
 1st Scratch race, Copenhagen
 1st Four Days of Rotterdam (with Adrie Visser)

2010

UCI Track Cycling World Cup Classics
 1st Elimination race, Melbourne

2011

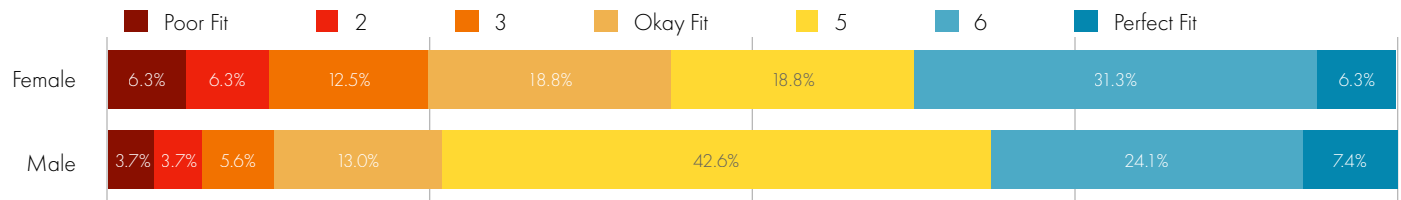
1st Scratch race, UCI Track World Championships

2012

1st Madison (with Roxane Knetemann), National Track Championships
 1st Elimination race, Revolution Series Manchester

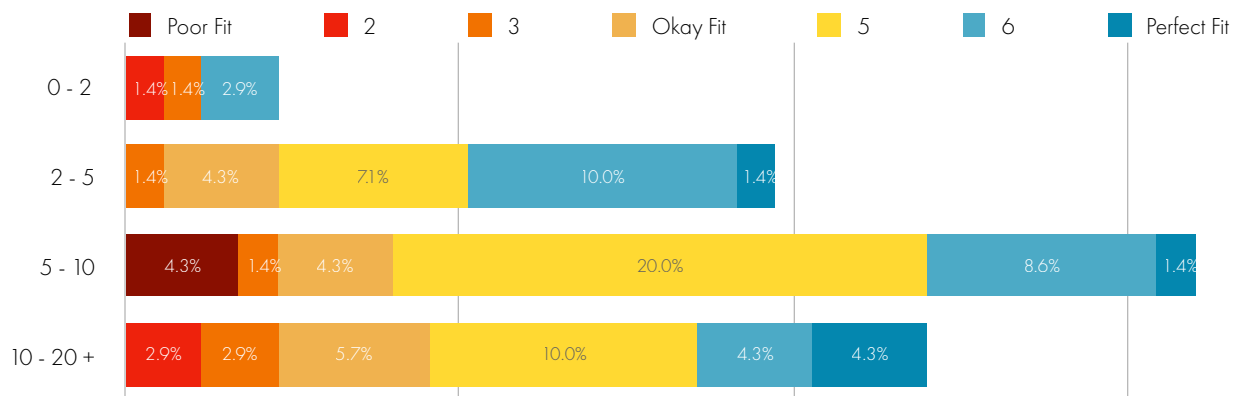
Validation – Surveys & Interviews

A Typeform survey/questionnaire was created and shared via *Instagram*, *LinkedIn*, *Facebook*, and word-of-mouth. A total of 73 respondents contributed to the data set. Open-ended questions were helpful in getting further engagement that resulted in subsequent candidates for interviewing.



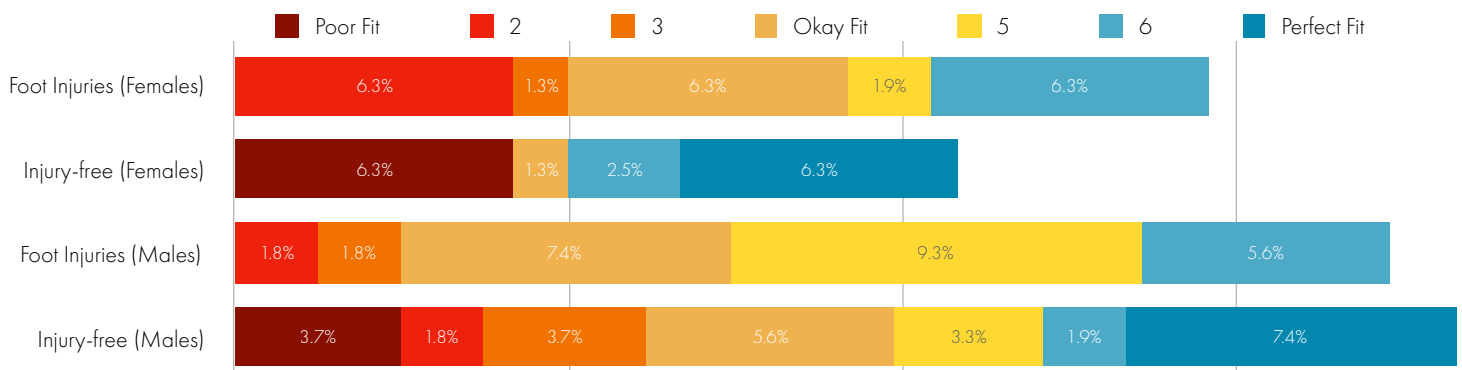
How the Shoe Fits by Gender

Conclusion: men find their shoes to fit slightly better than mediocre, while more women are fairly evenly spread with the fit of their shoes.



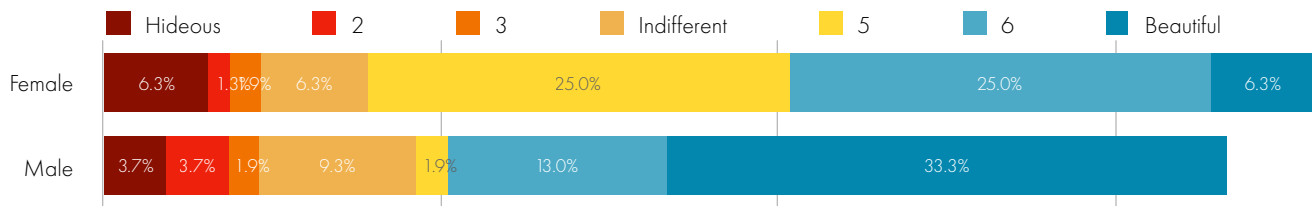
Shoe Fit compared to Weekly Ride Time (Hours)

Conclusion: those riding a moderate amount during the week are only moderately comfortable in their shoes.



Shoe Fit compared to History of Foot Injuries by Gender

Conclusion: of those polled, injury-free men are only moderately pleased with the fit of their shoes, while women with a history of foot injuries find their shoes ill-fitting.



Opinion of Shoe Aesthetic by Gender

Conclusion: perhaps the men won't be that difficult to please aesthetically, but a sizable percentage of women are only moderately impressed with the look of their shoes.

Quick stats:

Fit/Comfort Aspect

Keywords:

- 31 toe box
- 25 arch support
- 15 heel cup
- 11 width
- 5 stiffness
- 5 tightness
- 4 material
- 4 numbness
- 3 adjustability
- 3 closure
- 3 sizing
- 3 top of foot
- 2 ventilation
- 2 volume
- 1 footbed
- 1 hot spots
- 1 tongue
- 1 weight

Fashion/Aesthetic Aspect

Keywords

- 41 color
- 18 closure mech
- 13 logo
- 10 simple
- 4 laces
- 4 kit matching
- 4 non-cycling look
- 3 material
- 3 minimalism
- 3 shape
- 3 sleek
- 2 sole
- 1 pattern
- 1 texture
- 1 visibility

Next Pair Wishlist Aspect

Keywords:

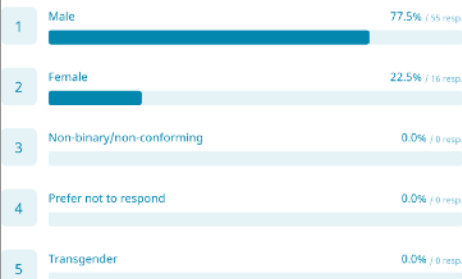
- 15 fit improvement
- 7 aesthetic improvement
- 7 adjustability
- 7 n/a
- 5 durability
- 3 tread change
- 1 customization
- 1 lighter weight
- 1 material change
- 1 replaceable parts
- 1 water resistance

Survey: <https://research.typeform.com/to/tPerMILh>

Report: <https://research.typeform.com/report/tPerMILh/AZNqMT6r1Eb1LnsF>

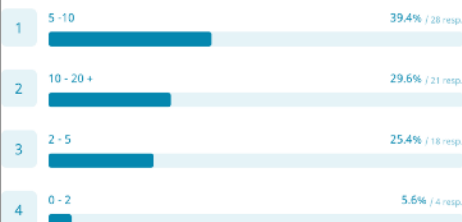
What gender do you identify with?

71 out of 71 answered



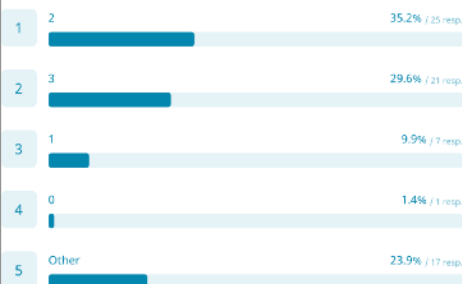
How many hours per week do you ride your bicycle?

71 out of 71 answered



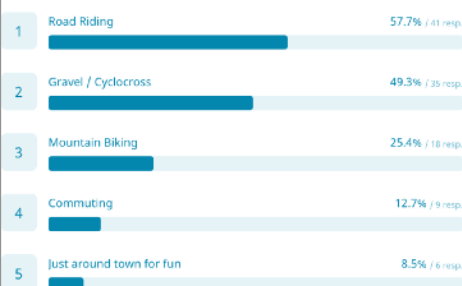
How many pairs of cycling specific shoes do you own?

71 out of 71 answered



What is your preferred category of bicycling?

71 out of 71 answered



What brand cycling shoe(s) do you wear the most?

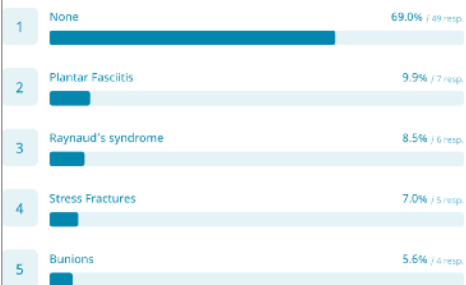
71 out of 71 answered

Outside of cycling brands, what designer footwear brands do you like?

69 out of 71 answered

Do any of the following medical conditions factor into your cycling shoe comfort or consideration:

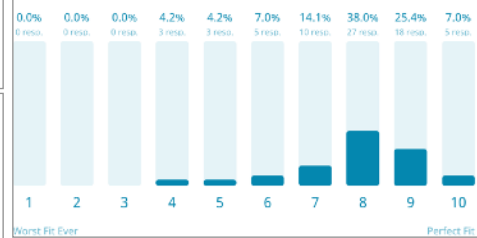
71 out of 71 answered



Does your cycling shoe fit well?

71 out of 71 answered

7.8 Average rating



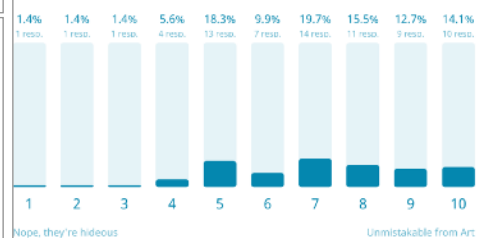
What aspects that work well or don't work well of that shoe's comfort could you elaborate on?

69 out of 71 answered

Do you think your cycling shoes look good?

71 out of 71 answered

7.0 Average rating



What specific aesthetic aspects of those shoes do you appreciate the most?

71 out of 71 answered

What would you like to see or have on the next pair of cycling shoes that you don't have now?

71 out of 71 answered

If interested in follow-up information, please provide your email

44 out of 71 answered

Interview Johnny May

Subject: Cycling Shoes & Equity
Conducted: Wednesday, October 13th, 2021, 2:30pm
Participant: Johnny May
Age: 53
Region: Baltimore, MD
Cycling history: competitive cyclist, riding majority of life, professional & certified bicycle fitter, massage therapist
Profession: massage therapist/bicycle fitter
Online Presence: <https://www.fullsweetcycling.com>
Shoe size: 44
Pronouns: he, him, his
Zoom recording: video 1525293323.mp4
Duration: 50:30



mWebber: [00:00:00] Once and if I record this.

jMay: [00:00:04] Oh, OK.

mWebber: [00:00:05] Yes. I'm not going to use anywhere, it's just for my so I can go back on. Yeah, I got you, I got you again. Thanks for doing this.

jMay: [00:00:14] Of course man, I mean, this is cool. This is cool for me too.

mWebber: [00:00:17] So cool. Yeah, I'm glad you think so. Yeah, they're they're doing some construction on my front porch of my house and my bike is up here. They're like dismantling the garage and it's like hammering all day long. Wow. Yeah, it's mainly it's it's mania.

jMay: [00:00:38] So are you attending class? Are you going to classes or are you still zooming in or

mWebber: [00:00:42] How is it working? It's all stupid. Zoom. Wow, damn. Yeah, it's it's really. It's like you.

jMay: [00:00:51] Yeah. How do you do when you got to do like projects and shit? I mean, don't you have to have a lab or some way to?

mWebber: [00:00:58] I can go into the building now and like, use the studio spaces now, which is good, but it's still not the same. There's no like community. There's no right. Right, right. It's really hard, but I'm getting through it. Yeah. Zoom Zoom works.

jMay: [00:01:18] Yeah, man. I mean, it's what we've had to do. You know, I mean, I haven't had to do it much, but just to keep in touch with people like, you know, Chris, my buddy in New York and a couple of other other of us, you know, we had like a Facebook group, which now we moved it to WhatsApp. But because he was getting what my buddy Ryan out in San Francisco? Well, Oakland is getting off of Facebook, even though I think WhatsApp is owned by Facebook, but he's just trying to get off the Facebook thing. Yeah. Anyway, yeah, we would do we'd have a Zoom call

like once a month or so, just kind of, you know, catch up and feel somewhat kind of sane.

mWebber: [00:01:59] So, yeah, it's good for that. It is certainly good for that.

jMay: [00:02:05] But yeah. So, yeah, I was I was going through the, you know, the questions that you that you sent me. So. Is that what what you want to talk about or

mWebber: [00:02:19] Was that like? Like I said, that was really just to kind of pry me a little bit. Ok. Basically, the project I'm doing is I'm in this footwear design class, OK? And you know, being from bikes, I wanted to design a cycling shoe. Of course, keeping it less than just design a cycling shoe. I wanted to put a sort of a message to it. Ok. Um, sort of bringing attention and a greater focus to gender equity. Ok. You know, last week was Paris-Roubaix and they had the women's first edition of the Paris-Roubaix. And it just kind of like there's this constant theme of equity issues with women's cycling, but you know, that stretches well beyond... Did you watch it, by the way? Yes.

jMay: [00:03:13] Jesus, man, I didn't see the women's. Yeah, I watched the men's last night. Just the highlights. They get brutal. Holy shit, man. I haven't seen one like that since probably like 2003, when Hincapie was like. And it was the same kind of mud and Jesus, man. I want to watch it again because it was just so much shit. It was amazing. But yeah, OK.

mWebber: [00:03:34] The women's was good, too, was it?

jMay: [00:03:36] Yeah, same conditions?

mWebber: [00:03:38] Just starting out to be bad conditions. But I think towards the end of it, it was it was getting bad. But that race itself, that women's race was like half the distance of the men's. Yeah, and the prize purse was like literally five percent of the men's.

jMay: [00:03:56] [00:03:56] That's the fucked up thing [00:03:57] which is cool about Charm City and Kris's idea was solid. Fucking idea was to do the equal payout, you know, for the

women. But yeah, that does bring up so many issues is like, how do you how do you approach that? Because just, you know, physically, there's obviously differences between men and women. I mean, [00:04:20] **women just aren't as strong. That's just a fact.** [00:04:24] But does that mean that they need to get paid less? Does that mean they can only do like half the distance that the men could do? And you know, so yeah, it's yeah, it's kind of a weird thing.

mWebber: [00:04:37] Yeah. So so that's sort of I don't want to design like a women's shoe specifically, but I want to design a shoe with that kind of theme in mind. Ok. Right. So. To that end, also like basically what what I want it to be is like sort of a fashion shoe that brings attention to the subject. Ok, so what? What I want to tackle is like a lot of aesthetics issues, but while I'm at it, you're a great example of someone who has a lot of experience on the flip side. Sure. And I imagine you see a lot of women and men. Yeah, yeah. Yeah, absolutely. So I'm hoping you can speak to those sort of gender differences, if that's if that's around there. Yeah. So, yeah. So real quick, Johnny May, how old are you, Johnny?

jMay: [00:05:34] Fifty three

mWebber: [00:05:36] Fuckin a

jMay: [00:05:37] Hundred fifty hundred Webber.

mWebber: [00:05:42] You're in Baltimore, still. Just some formality here. Questions Yeah, because I'm talking about gender. Do you respond to what? What what pronouns do you prefer him? He they,

jMay: [00:05:58] Uh, him, I guess. Yeah, right? No, dude. I mean. But that's not really pronoun or dude. Just dude.

mWebber: [00:06:09] How long you been riding a bike?

jMay: [00:06:14] God, thirty. I'd say. Thirty plus years. All right.

mWebber: [00:06:20] Um, what got you into it?

jMay: [00:06:24] Um, well, I would say generally as a kid, probably how most people got into it, like it was kind of that [00:06:31] **first sense of freedom.** [00:06:33] It grew up in the country and there wasn't anything to do. You know, we didn't have a lot of money, either. So it was like, I didn't do any sports growing up. That stuff never happened. And it was just we were kind of isolated in a way we weren't like out in, out in the country country, but it was, you know, outskirts of Frederick. And back then it was a little bit different, a lot more farms and things like that. So basically, I just ripped around on my cheap, you know, probably Kmart BMX bike. And and then from from then probably early 20s. A buddy of mine who raced motocross used to cross train in the off season and stuff on his mountain bike, and he got me into it. He let me or I either bought or I think I bought the bike from old steel Univega and started going up to the watershed and Frederick and Gambrills and just fucking riding toe clips and straps and that crazy, rock infested, like super difficult place to ride Frederick.

jMay: [00:07:39] You know, no suspension and just kind of stuck with it. I started noticing that the guys I was riding with, you know, they they couldn't stick with me anymore. And then I moved to Baltimore for a while, got my first like, you know, new bike, proper mountain bike, you know, twenty six. It had like the Manitou with the, you know, with the stance or with the the elastic elastomer. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, that type of suspension things are Manitou Four back then maybe or something. And yeah, [00:08:13] **and then I did the AIDS ride.** [00:08:16] Didn't have a road bike buddy, let me borrow

his I was thinking that road bike is going to be probably pretty boring. This was like '96, I guess. And then as soon as I got on a road bike, I was like, This is fucking amazing. And that was it and never turned back. It got on the first cycling team after that wound up doing the AIDS ride for four years in a row. And yeah, and then eventually moved to Baltimore and [00:08:41] **I had been racing and stuff like that.** [00:08:43] So that was kind of how so?

mWebber: [00:08:45] So racing? You've been racing, what, for 20 years or so?

jMay: [00:08:48] Yeah, I mean, racing, actually, that year after the first I did a time trial that year, it must have been, I guess, probably the end of the late summer of ninety seven. And I got on Coppi around that time. And yeah, and then the following year, which would have been '98. Yeah, I started doing crits and the dumb all the all the the races and then some of the longer road races, which I found I was a little better at than than the crit stuff. I always kind of I didn't suck, but it was always like kind of mid pack or, you know, how that she has a lot of luck and I was never going to be a sprinter anyway. So.

mWebber: [00:09:26] So, so I think what I'm getting like that what's been the [00:09:30] **source of inspiration was that feeling of freedom.** [00:09:32]

jMay: [00:09:32] Yeah. And **it still is today,** which is why, you know, there's still everybody on the team gives me shit for like, Oh, you don't ride with anybody, you don't do. I'm like, I like being alone. That's why I like cycling. [00:09:42] **You know, that's like my time.** [00:09:44] So, yeah, and that's that's what it was then. I think and that was that from the time I was a kid, right, riding around on that bike and getting that sense, I remember riding to my friend's house, which dude was probably like two miles away at the time, [00:10:00] **but it seemed like I was riding across the country,** [00:10:03] you know? And then that first road bike ride, which would have been in ninety six, I was like, This is that same feeling [00:10:11] **I could go far. I could be by myself. I could go fast.** [00:10:14] And so, yeah, and so that's what it's always been, is that [00:10:18] **freedom and just the solitude, you know, independence?** [00:10:21] Yeah. And [00:10:22] **seeing stuff and you know, we see stuff, we see stuff that normal people don't really see because** [00:10:28] you can only see things the way we see it. If you're, you know, because you're on a bike, it's not the same driving or whatever. It's kind of the same feeling with motorcycle, too. But definitely with the bike, you're just like, you're right there. I mean, you're one fall away from everything is there. You're not encased in this metal thing.

mWebber: [00:10:46] Yeah, a lot of this also is is kind of getting information. Part part of a design is especially for for designing a product for people is to kind of know what what their mind is, what their spirit is, what they're thinking and how they're thinking. But when they're riding, that's sort of the heart of those questions. Like, yeah, transitioning to kind of the more product side of it is like how long, how long you been doing fit, how long been a fit guy?

jMay: [00:11:17] I would say, well, I mean, certainly when we started the shop was when I really got started with all that. So that would have been, I guess, 10, 11 years now, you know, 11 years plus, I guess. But and that was a good [00:11:30] **fit because of the personal training stuff and the massage therapy stuff.** [00:11:33] I had all that. I had all that stuff already. So I was that's when we talked in and Kris and Norman and I were like, OK, yeah, it makes sense for you to go to specialize because this would be your thing

[00:11:46] with your interest in the human body. [00:11:48] and stuff like that. So yeah, that's where that's how that got started.

mWebber: [00:11:51]

jMay: [00:12:02]

mWebber: [00:12:06]

jMay: [00:12:12]

mWebber: [00:12:21] I might reach out to her to do a little interview as well.

jMay: [00:12:24] Yeah, yeah. If you speak with her, tell her. I said, Hey, I mean, she might not remember me, but yeah.

mWebber: [00:12:30] Um. So when you get new shoes, I can't believe how expensive those Lakes are, you there?

jMay: [00:12:39] Yeah, I mean, it's crazy. I mean, they have several different levels, of course. But yeah, they ain't cheap and don't get me started on their customer service. I love the product, but I've had some issues with their customer service, but that's not what we're, you know, it's something different. But yeah,

mWebber: [00:12:54] It adds into it, though. What? What about them that you'd like? What made what made you try out Lake?

jMay: [00:12:59] Well, the [00:13:00] main thing with Lake is, you know, following some fitters and things like that, Instagram or whatever YouTube, you know, getting around, doing the education thing, always trying to learn more. [00:13:10] Like shoes just kept coming up as like, Hey, we all used to remember Lake shoes as those winter boots, you know? But they worked, you know, and that's all Lake was known for. And then somehow in these last, I don't know, fifteen years or so, maybe ten years, they just revamped, and now they have really good looking product. But the main thing was in all these fitters we're talking about, it is the [00:13:35] options for the width because [00:13:39] I'll narrow the typical cycling shoe is that was the one thing that first got me hooked on. Looking at them was how they approach the width thing. And it's not like this narrow ass toe box. I wear wide in those guys, which seems weird to me because I don't feel like I have a wide foot, but. When we do the measurements, you know, I came out as a a, as a wide, and that was actually my choice. And this is the customer service problem that I had because when I did the measurements right and I got contacted customer service because I'm like, Hey, I want to make sure I'm ordering the right thing here. I don't have tons of money to do this, so I need to do it right. I'm bike fitter, blah blah blah. Explain the whole thing. And the woman I was working with, she's like in the face of the measurements, right? She's like, Well, you know. That's the measurement of the last, but the shoe is actually a little bit wider, so I think you're going to be fine with a standard width. And I was like, Oh, go by what you you know, you're telling me one thing, but your measurement guide is telling me something else. So I fucking order the standards I should have ordered both and just sent back the pair that didn't fit right, but I wasn't smart enough to do that. So now I know

mWebber: [00:14:54] That's like a \$800 layout of money,

jMay: [00:14:56] Dude. Oh dude, I spent my shoes right now or worth a thousand dollars because I'll tell you what happened in a minute. So I get I get them. I put one on the right, which is I know my right foot is just a little bit wider by mm, right? And I'm like, Nope. It

feels just like my Specialized, which feels good. But certain times I'd get that pain on the lateral side of the foot or I get toe numbness or pain, you know, somewhere in there and I was like, [00:15:24] The shoes are great. The S-Works are great, but they're still just not the right fit. [00:15:28] So I'm like, I don't. I've got to send these things back, so I send them back. They fucking get lost because like a dumb ass, I sent them USPS. I didn't. I didn't. I didn't do it right. I should have had a signature because my thinking is they're going to send these things back to a warehouse, right? There's going to be somebody there. It's not like you're dropping it on somebody's doorstep and somebody is going to steal them, right? Well, they never showed up. I didn't get, Lake didn't want to work with me at all, I had since ordered the right pair of shoes, which are fine and the ones I'm using now. And after USPS like saying We can't help you. I sent an appeal because they denied the first claim. I sent an appeal. They wound up giving me 65 bucks back, which was way more than late gave me because they gave me nothing, not even a discount on the second pair of shoes. So that's my Lake story.

mWebber: [00:16:21] What about the Specialized don't? Don't you like? You said you had the S-Works.

jMay: [00:16:24] The [00:16:24] toebox is just it's just a little too narrow. [00:16:27] You know, if you were to take that now I since I'm always telling people this when they're buying cycling shoes. Nobody thinks about the shoes and nobody thinks about what footbed is in there, it's the same everybody, unless they have foot problems. Nobody coming in to my studio. I don't care how good a rider they are has any decent foot beds in the shoe. They're mostly the stock foot beds that came in there, right? So I say, [00:16:53] pull them out and stand on them and see where your foot is. [00:16:56] yeah, oh, you're on the Pat Miller the Solestar? Nice.

mWebber: [00:17:00] Yeah, they're good.

jMay: [00:17:01] I've never tried those. I use the G8s, which are fucking amazing. But but Pat didn't like the G8s because I turn them on to the G8s and he's like, No, dude, they hurt my feet so bad I couldn't wear them. G8 Performance Twenty six twenty is the shoe or the foot bed? Yeah. And so. Yeah. I'm sorry, what was the question again,

mWebber: [00:17:26] Just oh yeah, yeah,

jMay: [00:17:29] Yeah, it's just a little narrow. Everything else about the Specialized. I [00:17:32] like the volume of the shoe, [00:17:34] you know, from like the base up to the top of the ankle. That's all fine for me. But I put these Lakes on with those G8 insoles and it's like, Dude, [00:17:45] I don't even feel like I have feet anymore. [00:17:47] When I ride, I just never think about them. I don't have any pain. I don't have any discomfort.

mWebber: [00:17:53] And that right, there is probably. An aim for a good shoe. Right? You don't know you actually have it on, right?

jMay: [00:18:04] [00:18:04] Yeah. So many people. Oh yeah. Well, I have this. I have that. Yeah. Of course, my feet are numb. Of course I have hot spots. It's cycling. I'm like, No, no, no, we're thinking about this wrong. You know, we want to eliminate. And this is in my practice like, this is the thing. It's like I'm trying to eliminate all the unwanted suffering, you know, fuck Eddy Merckx. Like, I'm sure everything hurt on him because of his lousy shoes and when. But it's like these days you don't have to do that. Let's keep the suffering from the effort, not from poor equipment or poorly adjusted equipment. [00:18:40] So that's what I'm telling folks. So I'm like, if you have a little bit of pain like. That is not natural, it's not from effort, let's try to fix

it, I mean, if it makes a one percent difference, those things add up. Talk to Team Sky. That was their thing. When they started, they didn't win shit. And then suddenly they revamped their entire process from the pillows. These guys slept on the beds, they slept on how much sleep they were getting the shoes. I mean, you name it, if it made a one percent difference, they did it. And all these little things added up to a big difference in the end, you know? So that was sort of their philosophy, just all these tiny little things you could do to improve performance.

mWebber: [00:19:22] What what like besides what I know how these industries work. Cycling, especially like I know I used to bitch about the Romin saddle like they don't make it anymore. Are there any shoes from the from the days of yore that that you wish they still made?

jMay: [00:19:39] Absolutely. I got them downstairs. The [00:19:42] Nike Poggio. [00:19:44]

mWebber: [00:19:44] Oh, that's right.

jMay: [00:19:45] Those things would have light, and they're still probably one of the lightest shoes that's ever been made for cycling. I don't know how the stiffness is. It may say I should check and see if it has the stiffness index on the bottom. But yeah, every once in a while I put them on and the toe box is fine. I never remember my foot hurting in those shoes. Yeah, and they were great shoes and still has a back up pair.

mWebber: [00:20:11] You just mentioned stiffness. This is something I always my feet do tend to hurt and and I think it's because the shoes are too fucking stiff. Is that is that a thing?

jMay: [00:20:24] It shouldn't be because you don't really want one from the power transfer. That's one thing. But the other thing is you don't really want the bones of the foot because cycling is unnatural for the foot. Foot's not designed to do that. So [00:20:37] you don't want the bones that way, like moving around in your foot. [00:20:42] So you want it to be rigid and you want the power transfer. So that comes from the stiffness. You may find that if the shoes aren't as stiff, you might hurt worse. So sometimes it comes down to what's in the shoe, and we got to make sure that we've got supportive foot beds, which off the bike I tell people, Go barefoot, strengthen your feet, let your toes splay out. I'm wearing toe spacers right now. It's made a huge difference in the last couple of months, really? Yeah, absolutely. It's like just stretching your toes constantly. And so, yeah, but when we when we're cycling. The [00:21:21] proprioception, the brain doesn't understand what the foot is doing because it's not gait, it's not a gait cycle, it's not walking or running. [00:21:29] right. So we need that arch support. We need something pressing on the arch to let the brain know that, hey, the foot is here and the foot can work. So the one of the main reasons for the for the cycling footbed is like G8s or even the Solestar or whatever it is if you look behind. The reason why, hey, this is why we use these for cycling is because we need that proprioception would be the number one thing and we need to support because the foot just doesn't work the same as it does when we're walking. So people say, Well, you know, I did what you told me and I feel that pressure all my arch. I'm like, You'll get used to it. [00:22:07] You should feel the pressure on your arch in a cycling shoe. [00:22:10] you know? So it's just

mWebber: [00:22:13] That was like the number two sort of physical complaint, pain, whatever from the survey, I was flat feet. People like our flat feet, those are big things.

jMay: [00:22:25] Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah. And and, you know, foot exercises, there's things. And look, nobody's born with flat feet, man. I mean, it doesn't really happen. There's like, I think three percent or less than three percent of the population are born with any type of foot issue deformity, flat feet, that stuff a lot of the time bunions, nobody's born with a bunion, man. What happens is we stick them in these shoes, you know, and it does this and that's where bunions come from, you know? And yeah, well, right. Or we're wearing these Nike Airs that are basically like a cast on your foot. And then we wonder why our feet hurt if we're not wearing those shoes. You know, my neighbor, she's like, I have to wear shoes around the house because my feet hurt. If I don't and I'm like, It's a double. It's like but a neck brace on wear for 20 years and take it off and see how well you can hold your 10 pound head up. It's going to be very the muscles just don't do the job anymore. Same, you know.

mWebber: [00:23:30] So so you don't like the look of your your lake shoes?

jMay: [00:23:35] I do. I do. Yeah, I'm down with. I mean, [00:23:38] they're pretty basic. They're just white and black. [00:23:41] You know, they come in. They don't have a whole lot of colors now. They have a custom program. And I didn't do that, luckily, because if I would have done that on that first pair of shoes, that would have gotten screwed. Yeah, but they do custom colors. I don't know how much extra it costs. I did order from them a pair of BOAs to match the the kit with. Now that although we've changed it with the [00:24:03] bright yellow, like the Day-Glo yellow bands and you know my helmet and my glasses, it just matches. [00:24:13] So I got that's the one. The little bling thing I got for the shoes was new boas. Yeah.

mWebber: [00:24:21] But when you when you go for a new pair of shoes, I mean, this seems obvious to me, but you're your [00:24:26] primary decision factor is fit and comfort. [00:24:29]

jMay: [00:24:30] Sure. Yep. Yep, yep. Yep. Yep, yep. Yeah.

mWebber: [00:24:34] 20 percent being aesthetic or is it like one? Well, yeah,

jMay: [00:24:39] I mean, that's always going to draw. I mean, look, there's cool looking shoes, and that's fine, but it's definitely going to be. I mean, the Lakes aren't the aren't the coolest looking shoes out there, but they still look good to me. And yeah, I'd say definitely what they look like. And because you think about, OK, what they look like, are we talking about shape or are we talking about color ways

mWebber: [00:25:05] You tell me? I mean, it

jMay: [00:25:06] Could, right? It could be either one. So I find, you know, even if I don't love the shape, maybe they come in a color that I can say, OK, I can live with this. [00:25:15] think Bont shoes are really ugly. [00:25:17]

mWebber: [00:25:18] They look like weird socks.

jMay: [00:25:20] Yeah, yeah, they do. And they do the they do the really sort of square wider toe box, though, which is which is good. Yeah. So that's another brand that I haven't experimented with those guys. But yeah, Lake, I don't think they're the the coolest looking shoes out there. They're [00:25:39] little kind of like retro. [00:25:41] but they have moldable heel cups, which is cool. You can mold them

as many times you want, just throw them in the oven at like two hundred.

mWebber: [00:25:48] Oh wow.

jMay: [00:25:49] Pop them out after five minutes and just take your thumbs and or your hand and squeeze them together while you're wearing them with putting pressure down or have somebody do it.

mWebber: [00:25:59] That's that you find benefit from that.

jMay: [00:26:02] Oh, yeah, absolutely. I mean, there's moldable Heel Cup is great [00:26:05] **because individuality like everybody's different** [00:26:09] So some people have a wider heel. I've got a somewhat narrow heel, and that's that can be a problem for folks with certain shoes. I mean, look at shoes. I mean, let's face it, dude. [00:26:22] **Cycling shoes are not designed for overweight people** [00:26:24] They're all designed, pretty much. Thinking that people are skinny cyclists or pro cyclists, I mean, that's kind of how it goes. So that's why I think Lake is a little bit different there in their approach. Yeah.

mWebber: [00:26:43] What about? You as a massage therapist and your master bike fitter, I don't want to be talking to some amateur. Well, yeah,

jMay: [00:26:54] I didn't get the I didn't get the what is it? I'm not the certified master. They might have changed it now. Basically, if I wanted to get that, even though now I couldn't, because I'm not out of, you know, I've worked for myself, so I'm not a shot. But you go and you test out with with Dr. Pruitt, you know? Yeah.

mWebber: [00:27:15] And you're a master in my eyes, Johnny. Yeah.

jMay: [00:27:19] Well, I did achieve that before I left. That's like the level two and the highest level is, you know, the certified thing, but it's just a money maker Specialized.

mWebber: [00:27:28] But what kind of gender issues do you see in bike fit? That's a very broad question, so,

jMay: [00:27:36] Yeah, like what type of issues are we talking, like body issues

mWebber: [00:27:42] Or are there significant differences? Sure.

jMay: [00:27:46] Yeah, yeah. [00:27:47] **One, women tend to be more flexible. You know, they tend to have wider hips. That's** [00:27:53] more of a saddle thing, but sometimes it's a stance width kind of thing. And yeah, I mean, those are going to be those are I feel like sort of two major ones would be the flexibility issue and and the different different pelvic issues or ischial tuberosity widths or design of the hips is going to saddle than shoes. But yeah, and I find [00:28:24] **sometimes women will buy men's shoes because. Their shoes aren't wide enough.** [00:28:29]

mWebber: [00:28:30] That is a good. When I look. Are there significant differences from the brands for gender? Are there specific men's shoes, specific women's shoes? Are they that different?

jMay: [00:28:41] Well, I couldn't tell you how different they are because that would involve like sort of getting the I don't really think they are. I still think almost in a way [00:28:54] **it's a shrink it and pink it kind of thing.** [00:28:56] really. Yeah, I mean, because do the women now again, this is I'm not certain. I mean, I may be totally

wrong on this, but I don't see any real differences in volume or width, you know, in in between the men's and the women's shoes. But [00:29:20] **women can have wide feet to when we can have really narrow feet and men the same way.** [00:29:24] So in terms of in terms of that, I don't think there's a whole lot of difference in the in the way the shoes are made. You know, it's just basically size run.

mWebber: [00:29:36] So so when it's labeled a women's shoe, you're suspecting that it's just a different style.

jMay: [00:29:44] Right? It's [00:29:44] **just a rebranded, yeah. Yeah, different colours, different graphics** [00:29:48] Maybe like whatever. I don't see any major major differences anatomically, and I don't know that there needs to be at the end of the day, you know, you need something that is wide enough and as long enough for your foot. Yeah, really, what matters is is what you're putting in the shoe, you know, because we aren't walking on these things. And that's where most people fail. Because with the cycling shoe, they're like, Oh, look at this thing, you know, it's five years old. It still looks pretty new. Yeah, but that footbed is also five years old, and that's the part that wears out. [00:30:25] **We don't walk a run in these things, so the shoe itself isn't really going to wear out.** [00:30:28] especially if it's a carbon sole. That thing will last until the leather rots off or whatever. It's the footbed that makes to me makes the real difference. But still, you've got to do the thing of pulling the footbed that out. [00:30:41] **Standing on it is wide enough for you.** [00:30:43] Make sure you've got the right length shoe and then you're in the ballpark.

mWebber: [00:30:48] Where where this whole project sort of started in my head was the ideal of making shoes that both men and women, because personally, I think women's shoes typically style women's shoes, fashion look way fucking cooler than men's. Oh yeah, way more. Way more in interest. Way more excitement. Way more design.

jMay: [00:31:11] Well, they've also got way more styles, too, because you think about with with with women, they the heel variation. Yeah, they can change the heels so much, and that changes the shoe from like a ballet flat to stilettos. Yeah. Don't really have that. We don't walk around and you know, we have the standard heel height in a boot or like a dress shoe, and that's about it. So you throw that in. And yeah, there's there's way, more way more options, I think, for for for women's shoes fashion wise than than men's shoes.

mWebber: [00:31:43] But yeah, the whole the whole point of my asking anything about fashion or kind of style shoes you like is my ideal to sort of meld the two put a cycling shoe with a more stylistic fashion aspect of it. I don't know if it's possible, but that's what I'm exploring here.

jMay: [00:31:59] Yeah, the you know, when we're when we're talking about just design before I forget this because on the ride, I was thinking about things that if you were saying, design your own cycling shoe, what would you change from? Industry right now, the biggest thing by far, the biggest thing is for fuck's sake, [00:32:20] **drill the holes further back on. Yeah.** [00:32:25] it's ridiculous, man. It's ridiculous. There's no reason that the holes aren't drilled a little bit further back. Everybody should be. Most folks should be running their cleats a little further back anyway. [00:32:39] **Shortens the lever arm, especially if you're riding long distances. So it's easier on the calf and the Achilles.** [00:32:44] right? Because we're if you put the cleat out here, your heel is really going to drop right. If you put the heel here, not much of a lever arm, right? So I learned that from the folks doing RAAM. They'll put the cleat in the middle of the drill

their shoes and put the cleat in the middle of their arch. No kidding. Save their calves and their Achilles, right? So that's the there's one thing right there. Also, it gets it away from the joints and the toes, which is the old old. You know, the new neutral, as Specialized used to describe it is getting that, getting the cleat back behind the ball of the foot or the pedal spindle not intersecting on the ball of the foot, about five millimeters behind. And I go even more than that. Everybody that comes in, pretty much. I'm slamming those cleats back.

mWebber: [00:33:37] No shit. I might try that out.

jMay: [00:33:40] And, you know, because look, I mean, take your shoe, loosen the cleat and see how far you can push it forward while you'd never need to. It makes no sense. Typically, you can get it far enough for, but you can't get it far enough back for most people. So, yeah, that's that that I would do. [00:33:57] **And the other thing I would do is offer more widths** [00:34:01] right and have a like Lake does. This is a big thing I like about Lake. You're not necessarily going, Oh, I'm a 46, I'll order a 46. No, no. They put the chart up there with the [00:34:14] **measurements of their lasts, and that's what you base your size off of.** [00:34:18] You know, that would be the other thing I would say. You know, boom, there you go. Yeah, yeah. And have people do their sizing like that, have them measure their foot? Everybody comes in for a fit now. They walk out with measurements, overall length and at the longest part and the widest part in millimeters. That's how you should size the shoe not, oh, I'm a forty six [00:34:44] **and the Brannock device. Fuck that thing.** [00:34:46] I mean, it's not. Not good. Well, here's the thing if I use a Brannock device, I have a really long arch.

jMay: [00:34:54] So the directions on that thing, if you're using it properly, which most people don't, is. You know, that thing you slide on the side that goes against your that is measuring your arch length. Now if I went by what's bigger, either my overall length, right or that measurement I get from the arch. And those correlate to to the to the to the euro size. Ok, so if I measure my overall length, I measure about a forty five to a forty five and a half, however. In my arch length, it says I should be wearing a size 47 shoe. Forty seven. No way. You wear a forty-fivenow. Yeah. Forty five or forty five and a half, I think my Lakes are. I think I'm pretty sure they're forty five and a half. Specialized are also forty five and a half, but before they change their last, I used to wear forty four and a half and the Specialized. But that was back in the days when I didn't know what the fuck I was doing and the shoes I know they were too small, so

mWebber: [00:36:00] I got a right pair of these Bontragers, OK? And what I've noticed on them is like this. This whole side here just flattens out and splays out because they're too wide for me.

jMay: [00:36:16] Is it too wide or is it there's too much volume

mWebber: [00:36:20] This way, too much volume? Yeah, actually, you

jMay: [00:36:22] Know what I mean, if you have like a foot, that's like a lower volume foot might not be the shoe for you. Do you have to tighten down or do you have to tighten down those things almost until the two sides of the shoe are closed?

mWebber: [00:36:35] It's not that close now, OK? No, no. You can see the where on the tongue. Ok.

jMay: [00:36:41] Yeah. So yeah, that's that's another thing where you can figure out a lot of times it's too much material in the in the height or I call it the volume. I mean, I I don't know.

mWebber: [00:36:51] Yeah, no, that sounds right.

jMay: [00:36:53] Yeah, yeah. Where that measurement? I don't take that measurement. No, no, because I wouldn't know what to do with it because shoe manufacturers don't give you any of that shit.

mWebber: [00:37:03] How do you measure with the tape measure just the

mWebber: [00:37:06] I guess I would if I measured it.

mWebber: [00:37:08] But no, I mean, like, you're doing foot measurements now.

jMay: [00:37:12] Oh yeah. So I was like, I got to figure out how to do this. I was using paper and pen and I'm like, This is so fucking wasteful. So I went out and I got myself a little whiteboard and I haven't put one foot on the whiteboard and one foot on the ground with, you know, they're even weight on both feet. And then I mark the widest part and the longest part. Then they shuffle over, put the other foot on the on the, you know, next to the one I just did and do the same thing, measure the widest part and the longest part. And then I'll take those measurements with ruler after. So yeah, and I just erase it works great because, you know, Joe, he's like, Oh, I thought you might want to get one of these? And he got me one of the Specialized heat thing that you like. I don't need that for arches. I look at people's arches and can tell what they need. That's just a fancy gadget. It's like the bells and whistles thing. But that has that's graded too and also has the size markings on it. But no, I just take them and people on their fit report have their measurement for the for the width and the length of their foot. So.

mWebber: [00:38:26] So what what system are you using now Retül Specialized still or

jMay: [00:38:31] Do I basically made my own some self from Specialized, some stuff that I work with Chris Comfort on? He's been helping with that. So yeah, if you're interested, I can send you the I can send you my basically a blank fit report file. See, see, you can see what it looks like. Yeah, I'll send it to you. All right. Are you? Are you Mac based?

mWebber: [00:38:57] Yeah, yeah, yeah.

jMay: [00:38:58] Ok. Because I can share it with you over Numbers.

mWebber: [00:39:02] Yeah, do that.

mWebber: [00:39:03] Yeah. Ok. Yeah.

mWebber: [00:39:05] Why do you like Kenneth Coles?

jMay: [00:39:09] They are. Well, they're probably the nicest dress shoes I've had. I've got two pair of them, and I found that they look really good for me, to me. And they've they've always been comfortable. Yeah, I mean, [00:39:30] **those wingtips are like, could live in those things** [00:39:32] But again, it's like, I know what it's doing to, you know, I know the toe box. Obviously, it narrows things up a bit. So I haven't worn them once. And this was a couple of months ago when I went to dinner and I haven't worn them in two years, you know, because there's nowhere to go. I mean, there is, but I just choose not to. So, yeah, but yeah, I have, yeah, the wingtips. And then I have a pair of they're just sort of [00:40:02] **regular black Oxford style** [00:40:05] and they're good. They're not

breaking the bank, but they're super comfortable and and they've been durable. I mean, they've they've lasted really, they've done well and they've held up.

mWebber: [00:40:16] So I had a pair once years ago. I went on some. It's like a dance that at the University of Washington is putting on. I wasn't even going there and I was like, Yeah, I got these girls. They all they all need some dates. So I was like, Yeah, sure, I'll go out on a date, bought some nice shoes. The evening was crazy and I was like, You know what? I can't afford these shoes. I returned the next day, but they were nice shoes. I do remember them being nice.

jMay: [00:40:45] They're super. Yeah, yeah, I've just as a brand. I mean, yeah, they're they're nice without spending, you know, like Templeton, because we would always talk about wingtips because he would come in, you know, dress from work. And I always I'm like, Damn, he has really nice shoes because I notice people's shoes. And so we started talking about it. He's like, Oh yeah, I got these and I got these and these from Italy and blah blah blah blah. So I'm like, Yeah, I've heard of all those brands, but I drop an \$800 on,

mWebber: [00:41:12] You know, you talk to him ever.

jMay: [00:41:16] Yeah, occasionally he like, Yeah, I'll hear from them. And he had been in town and things like that, I think, to to visit so every once in a while. But usually it's just like likes on Strava or some kind of shit like that, you know? Yeah, if I see something that reminds me of send him a text, you know, but yeah, he's a good dude. I miss him.

mWebber: [00:41:37] Yeah, same funny me. I love this sense of humour. He was a very funny person.

jMay: [00:41:44] Yup, yup, yup. Shadowfax, man, I don't know. I can't remember what the other bike was called either.

mWebber: [00:41:55] Yeah, man. Yeah, man, thank you for this. Yes. Is that

jMay: [00:42:02] Good? Is that going to work for you?

mWebber: [00:42:04] Absolutely. Yeah. I may. I may throw some questions at you here and there, but do it. Yeah, that'd be great. You do believe just back to the original kind of thesis of this project. Do you do believe that there is equity issues in cycling? Between between the genders.

jMay: [00:42:22] Absolutely. Sure. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. And I think, you know, the interesting thing is it's I think cycling is having a harder time catching up because it's not as much of a mainstream sort of thing. And in Europe, it's like it's just a kind of standard thing. You know that I think women are treated, especially in cycling, like, oh, well, let's let's again like shrink it and pink it, you know, make it like a less hard sport or whatever the thing is. And it seems like there's more of a movement here to change that around than there is in Europe because cycling is such an old sport in Europe, you know? But that's just my feeling. I'm sure Auer could probably talk a lot more about that, you know, especially since he'd been, you know, they've been living there the last bunch of years. So.

mWebber: [00:43:10] But I might actually reach out to Amber to see if she wants to.

jMay: [00:43:14] Yeah, I was just about to say I think she would be great doing everything that she did with Specialized. Yeah, she probably shed weigh more light on that than I could, so from the technical aspects of the shoes, I feel, you know, I could offer some stuff there, but that the gender equality stuff, I think she'd be a good person to reach out to.

mWebber: [00:43:34] Yeah, there's there's another movie I came across called. This Changes Everything. Ok. It's not about cycling whatsoever, it's about Hollywood. Oh, OK. And as I'm watching, I'm like, This is this is the theory behind this project. This is about gender inequities and, you know, disparity between between Hollywood executives and women directors and everything. And I was like, there's so many parallels with cycling. Yeah, sure. I want to design something that's going to kind of I mean, I got one of these, these red iPhones, and it's there's a reason why it's red. There's there's a political there's a cultural reason behind it. So maybe a cycling shoe can do the similar thing. There you go. We're both contributing to helping that situation out, right? Yeah. So. Yeah, I'm probably taking on more than my instructor expects of me. VWSO hopefully I can pull this off, do it.

jMay: [00:44:45] Webber, when haven't you?

jMay: [00:44:45] It'd be great. I'm stoked to be even the smallest part of it. So.

mWebber: [00:44:49] Oh, you're bigger than small, man. I'll take it. Yes. Send me what you got there. I was actually going to see if you could send me all of your Specialized fit data from all of your fit customers.

jMay: [00:45:05] Well, I'd love to, but I can't, because where I don't know what happened at iPad, I'm guessing Norman has it or sold it or whatever. But all that stuff was on the iPad from, you know, from from the shop. So yeah, I don't know. I don't know what happened to that because people have asked me. Still, every once in a while again get, Hey, I tracked you down, can you get my fit data from eight years ago? I'm like, No,

jMay: [00:45:31] Specialized should have it.

jMay: [00:45:32] Put it well, they they have it. But here's the thing they don't get any pictures, they don't get any personal information. So we we went through that once before when somebody was looking for it and had Aaron from from Specialized try to dig it up. I think we eventually found it. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, there's no. There's no. Contact names, phone numbers, pictures, so yeah, it's just the raw data that they get, so but right?

mWebber: [00:46:08] Yes, sir. Yeah, man. Thank you.

jMay: [00:46:13] Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. You see, when I send you the thing now, yeah, basically a lot of the stuff is from the because that's how everybody does it. You need all that data that Specialized was getting make sense to have some of it. A couple of things. I threw out a couple of things I still may get rid of because I had better ways of doing it now. But I add it in my own things too. Like people are doing squatting, people are doing, you're going to see in there. It's a one third knee bend, which is the old Specialized thing. That's not what I do. I do a thing called a a balance and reach, which is quite a bit different. I can send you the video of that from this guy squat university. That's where I discovered that I've been using that, and it's way more tells you way more than the one third knee bend does. But I still have one third knee bend on the. You'll see that on the on the Fit report template.

mWebber: [00:47:06] Yeah, I'll check it out.

jMay: [00:47:07] Yeah, yeah, I'll send you that. I'll send you both those things. I'll send you that video and I'll send you the Fit report.

mWebber: [00:47:14] Yep, appreciate it, Johnny. Yeah, man.

jMay: [00:47:19] Absolutely. Yeah, I got it. You remember Kevin post? Do you remember him? He was a customer at the shop. Might have been slightly after your time or, well, no. Ok, anyway, he's local hampden guy and he's I go to his house and do fit stuff and I got to drop by and he just got one of the fancy new S-Works, mirrors, saddle, you know, the 3D printed one. Oh yeah, yeah, he wants me install that on his on his trainer bike, so I got to stop by and do that. So that's where I'm headed now.

mWebber: [00:47:50] Cool. Good luck. Let me know what you think of that saddle.

jMay: [00:47:53] Yeah, I have it. I have a one fifty five, actually. I'm sure you believe this. It was on a guy by my name blanking on the guy on the team that breaks everything. Why can't I remember his name?

mWebber: [00:48:11] Um, guy,

jMay: [00:48:12] Guy, why could I remember his name? Yeah. Guy, Guy got one of those and then he was riding on something happened to it. He took it back to Joe's and basically I found the epoxy had come loose from the rail. So he turned it back in and it was just sitting there. And Joe's like, You can have this thing and I'm like, I'd love to test it. So I brought it home, filled it up back up with epoxy, and some some just made sure it was solid. And I've been riding it. It's a little wide for me, but I had it on the trainer bike for a while. It's interesting. The only thing I don't like about it is that material is pretty grippy. So if you like to slide around on the saddle bit, it makes it a little harder because it kind of grips shorts, which I don't.

That's the only thing I don't love about it, but it's it's pretty interesting to ride.

mWebber: [00:48:59] Yeah, I wouldn't think you normally ride a one fifty five do you?.

jMay: [00:49:02] No I have one forty three? But yeah, the 150, it was OK, but you know, it was just a little a little wider than I needed it, but it was possible for me to ride it. So at least it tested. I had it on the road bike for a couple of months, right? So, yeah, cool man.

mWebber: [00:49:18] Well, good luck with that and everything. Thanks, man. Yeah. So wait real quick the hours. Amber and Kris, they're in Baltimore.

jMay: [00:49:26] Yeah, yeah. Yeah, I just saw them last night post-race meeting at Craig and Julias. They bought a house just a couple, just like half a block up from where they used to live. And what is it called Jonestown, which is weird. I didn't as part of Baltimore, like right at the end of eighty three. Kind of right next to it's very close to the shot tower, huh?

mWebber: [00:49:48] Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

jMay: [00:49:49] Curzon Street or whatever. But anyway, yeah, yeah. So they're living around the corner from Lazar, who moved to Mount Washington. So they're renting an apartment in a big house around the corner from from those guys. So they're here for the foreseeable future, I guess. Yeah, right?

mWebber: [00:50:08] Yeah, we've got the Amber. I don't want to hear from Kris. Yeah, I don't blame you. I don't need to hear from Kris. I need to hear from more some more women. So yeah, yeah.

jMay: [00:50:17] Yeah, sure, absolutely. Yeah.

mWebber: [00:50:18] Yeah, dude Appreciate it. Yeah, man. Keep in touch. You, too. Yep. See you.

Interview Mary Robbins

Subject: Cycling Shoes & Equity
Conducted: Thursday, October 14th, 2021, 2:15pm
Participant: Mary Robbins
Age: 37
Region: Charlotte, NC
Cycling history: semi-pro triathlete, multi-sport intro to cycling 10 years ago
Profession: banking/finance
Online Presence: <http://www.marysrobbins.com>
Shoe size: 41.5
Pronouns: she, her, hers
Zoom recording: video 1614588487.mp4
Duration: 34:31



mWebber: [00:00:14] Um, record keeping so I can go back on notes and everything.

mRobbins: [00:00:18] Yeah, totally. So tell me what you're doing, what this project is part of. Is it part of a degree you're getting or what's?

mWebber: [00:00:25] Yeah, yeah. I'll give you some background here. I'm no longer really working as a bike mechanic. It's basically all. Sorry, basically all. Just freelance stuff out of my garage now. Oh, wow. Because I've gone back to school full time and I'm going to the Academy of Art University here in S.F. and studying industrial design. So product design and this specific semester, I'm taking a class in footwear design.

mRobbins: [00:00:57] Awesome. Cool. I remember it. Industrial design and Academy of Art now. So it's jogging my memory from what I knew off of Instagram. Yeah. And what? Yeah, what Robert told me as well. Yeah, I wish I had known you were freelancing out of your garage. I mean, I recently moved to the East Coast. We still have our house in. It's in Petaluma, but we'll probably be out here for a year or two.

mWebber: [00:01:23] When you first, are you?

mRobbins: [00:01:25] I'm in North Carolina. Oh, cool. Yeah, yeah, it's where I lived before, where I went to college. So I have a pretty good work network here and got a job offer that I just couldn't refuse.

mWebber: [00:01:36] Well, that's what brought me to the West Coast in the first place as well. So I know how that goes.

mRobbins: [00:01:41] Well, cool. Well, I came prepared. So I've got a whole bevy of shoes back here. Awesome. Yeah. So feel free to kind of jump right into it.

mWebber: [00:01:51] All right. Yeah. So back to the project itself specifically. Obviously, coming from bikes myself, I wanted to design a cycling shoe. And initially, if you couldn't tell from some of the

questions in the questionnaire was focused around fashion. Yeah, my initial idea was like, how can we kind of meld sort of fashion and design shoes into a functional cycling shoe? Yeah, my instructor was like, Well, see if you can get deeper on that. So part of what I'm doing now is I want to kind of feel out not only the functionality, but sort of address the gender gender differences in terms of fit, but also as a larger message of gender disparities in cycling.

mRobbins: [00:02:39] Cool. That's like way deep. I love it. Yeah. And that's why when I saw your Instagram poll, I was like, I've got to help because there aren't that many women out there, right? I hope you got enough responses to help, but I'm happy to do what I can as well.

mWebber: [00:02:55] I appreciate it. I appreciate your answers were very thorough.

mRobbins: [00:02:59] They were brief, I'll be honest. So and the Instagram. So I'm happy to go into greater detail here.

mWebber: [00:03:05] Wonderful, wonderful. That's kind of gauged who kind of the pull into an interview situation by what people answered. So given my knowledge of your history and writing, I thought, You're a great candidate. Thanks. I'm very glad you're willing. So just some formalities. Mary Robbins How old are you, Mary?

mRobbins: [00:03:26] I'm thirty seven.

mWebber: [00:03:27] Thirty seven. What size shoes do you wear?

mRobbins: [00:03:31] I think I'm a seven and a half to eight. I mean, anywhere from a seven to an eight. Ok. So I think in European cycling shoes, it's like a forty one, forty one and a half. Yeah.

mWebber: [00:03:46] Awesome. I love it. You're so prepared. And given the current state of, you know, gender equity and

everything and awareness in the world, we're all kind of becoming more accustomed to the question What pronouns do you use?

mRobbins: [00:04:03] You know, I don't use pronouns like she. Her would be the answer to that.

mWebber: [00:04:07] Ok. Wonderful. So how long? How long were you, have you been riding? I know you've done a lot of triathlon multisport.

mRobbins: [00:04:18] So I've been riding through triathlons since two thousand, oh gosh, probably thousand eleven was my first race. Ok. Yeah. And so triathlon got me into cycling.

mWebber: [00:04:31] Interesting, actually, given my history, that's pretty common. Most, most people get into triathlon and they become more accustomed to cycling. So it spurs. Have you done much other cycling outside triathlon since?

mRobbins: [00:04:47] I haven't done any racing, but I've done a lot of kind of group rides with pure cyclists and I do a lot of cycling. I have a gravel bike, I have a road but multiple road bike, so I've gotten into it. I've dabbled, but I haven't raced competitively and

mWebber: [00:05:06] That's I don't I don't really race anymore either. I've kind of just get out for kind of mental escape.

mRobbins: [00:05:14] Yes, the best part of it, honestly,

mWebber: [00:05:17] What initially got you into triathlon?

mRobbins: [00:05:21] So I swam growing up and then I took a hiatus. I was like pretty competitive, and then I stopped swimming in college and into my early twenties, and I didn't do much of anything. And so then I wanted to start getting fit again. I started running, but I was terrible at running and I tried to triathlon and I won. So that was like instantly my thing. I realized I could be very good at it. Yeah, based on my swimming background, and I kind of took easily to cycling and everyone likes winning. So it was, yeah, that helps.

mWebber: [00:05:52] That helps it go. So in terms of like, what keeps you going into this sport? Do you still compete at all?

mRobbins: [00:05:59] I do well, so I actually just had a baby, so I thought I saw that on Instagram. Yeah, I think you probably saw that. So I've taken like a break with COVID was kind of a forced break and then got married and got pregnant kind of quickly thereafter. And so so I've been off of racing since twenty twenty, but I very much plan to go back. All right.

mWebber: [00:06:21] Well, congratulations on both those wedding in and child. Yeah, I guess I guess what was the inspiration? I mean, beyond just just swimming, like what's kept you going? Is it a it is the winning?

mRobbins: [00:06:37] I mean, part of it was [00:06:38] just progressing, [00:06:39] progressing to different levels. So I went from like just dabbling as an amateur to being an elite amateur, you know, from a short sprint race to all the way to racing in Kona, the Ironman. And then once I got to kind of the the pointy end of amateur racing, then I took my pro card and started racing as a pro. So it was always just [00:07:00] pushing the boundary and progressing for myself. [00:07:03] And then it was the [00:07:04] people that I met through the sport or [00:07:07] well. Both in triathlon and cycling, that really kind of made it fun on a day to day basis community. Yeah. You know, and then once I started racing as

a pro like I was never going to be world class. I was never going to be the best in the world as a pro. And so we'll see. [00:07:27] I still have unfinished business [00:07:29] but probably another couple of years. Yeah. All right.

mWebber: [00:07:33] That's awesome. I mean, part of what good product designer is going to be doing is just what we're doing here, kind of getting a feel for what people want, what people do, what drives people

mWebber: [00:07:45] To do, what they do. Yeah.

mWebber: [00:07:48] What people are thinking. And I guess I guess that's a good segue into that. What does? Like, what's going through your mind when you're sort of have that ambition and that,

mRobbins: [00:08:03] Yeah, that's a good one. That's a really good one. I guess it's always just pushing the boundaries, right? It's what's next. All right. And once you do one thing, you know, I guess a race is kind of a good allegory because in the moment, it's like really difficult and tough and painful. And then as soon as you get done, you're like, Wow, that was amazing. What's the next one? And so that's that's what always kept me coming back is just trying to push the boundary a little bit further,

mWebber: [00:08:33] Getting to the next screen.

mRobbins: [00:08:35] Yeah, yeah.

mWebber: [00:08:39] So about to your shoes. What? What made you get in the Bonts? How did you get a Bont shoes?

mRobbins: [00:08:44] Oh yeah. How did I get into them, I guess? Well, this is their triathlon shoe, they're it. I started [00:08:56] seeing a lot of very elite like world champion professionals wearing this shoe. And so that piqued my interest. And [00:09:03] then at the time, I was dating someone who was like always into like the best product. And so he somehow met the distributor and so started getting a sponsor through that guy and he encouraged me to try them. And then it's it's not necessarily the design that kept me coming back, but it's really the sole and the moldable carbon sole and power transfer. Ok. Like then, I do like the fit. So you just put these in the oven and mold the carbon to your foot bed, which really helped for me. [00:09:37] I actually think they're kind of ugly. Yeah. [00:09:40] yeah. I think if I'm honest.

mWebber: [00:09:44] Yeah. Well, that's a great that's a great segue as well. What makes them ugly to you?

mRobbins: [00:09:50] Like so I just I mean, I have like 15 pairs of shoes upstairs. So I brought the shoe that I race in and then I actually really like this shoe. I like the shape of it. It's I like the rounded toe. This is just the S-Works. It's an older model that I've completely trashed, right? But but I really like the [00:10:09] rounded toe [00:10:10] I like that. It's very kind of [00:10:12] classic lines. [00:10:14] It's [00:10:15] no frills. [00:10:16] This shoe is like a little clunkier.

mWebber: [00:10:18] Bont's always look like that. I think,

mRobbins: [00:10:20] Yeah, I think they do. And so this I just I don't know what it is about. This s works that I love, but I mean, I like the way the bow is. Look. I like the way it fits my foot, like, this is just a great shoe.

mWebber: [00:10:34] Do you find you mentioned the round toe? Yeah. Do you have issues with with like a toe box being too tight and other shoes?

mRobbins: [00:10:43] Yeah. So I mean, I do have like I need a wider toe box because I have a bunion on one of my feet. Yeah. So that's why the moldable Bonts actually are really nice.

mWebber: [00:10:55] Is that moulding? Is that something you do at home yourself?

mRobbins: [00:10:58] Yeah. Yeah, you just put them in the oven and I don't know how scientifically that works or if it is anything other than just kind of placebo effect, but it seems to work. And so, yeah, so I was able to kind of mold the toe box to be a little wider on these, which is nice. Yeah, yeah.

mWebber: [00:11:21] Huh? Yeah. How did you acquire nine pairs of cycling shoes? Is that all told historical or do you mean shoes?

mRobbins: [00:11:31] Oh, I know. So I go through these like once every two years you're like eighteen to twenty four months. And I ended up stripping the screws out of some of them, like the screw inserts. And so that's probably neglect, but like user error. But so I have a bunch of pairs. I have like three pairs of cycling shoes, then I have road shoes, I have old S-Works. I have some Shimano shoes just because then I just got these. Actually, before I got pregnant, I hadn't even open them. These are Bont Road shoes, and these are actually really cool. I like these.

mWebber: [00:12:22] They're all. Is that the plastic that has that rainbow effect?

mRobbins: [00:12:27] Let's open them. We're opening them for the first time. They look even [00:12:33] flashier, [00:12:33] even more ridiculous without. So they're just holographic or whatever. Yeah, yeah. Isn't that wild? I'm so pumped about this.

mWebber: [00:12:45] There's also going to be oven moldable.

mRobbins: [00:12:49] Yeah, they're moldable. So they've got this like molded carbon footbed, which I really like. Ok. It's a good power transfer. It can mold them. And then I do. Those are awesome.

mWebber: [00:13:00] Those are wild.

mRobbins: [00:13:01] Yeah, wild. That's a good way of putting it. And I actually, I like the shape of these more than I like the road shoes for the Bonts more than I like the triathlon shoes. I guess they're a little rounder and a little less clunky looking. Yeah.

mWebber: [00:13:15] Yeah, that's definitely, definitely an avenue that is worth exploring. Just there are a lot of road shoes that are, I know, SIDs. Me personally, way too tight. I love the look. I love the look of them. And I don't have particularly wide feet personally. But yeah, it's a tough nut to crack. There's so many companies trying this.

mRobbins: [00:13:36] And yeah, and it's got to be there's got to be a big kind of R&D investment in making shoes and then different sizes and different widths has got to be tough. So the [00:13:47] moldable piece is actually really nice. [00:13:49] Yeah, yeah. So to answer your original question, why do I have nine pairs and I probably have more than that, but that was like a reasonable number. And then I have gravel shoes, so you have one for each

discipline, right? Then I just wear and then aesthetics like these are these were really cool. These were an [00:14:11] impulse buy [00:14:12]

mWebber: [00:14:13] That's a good that's a good buy, though. Those are rad shoes.

mRobbins: [00:14:15] Yeah. Pumped about them.

mWebber: [00:14:18] So you got into gravel, huh?

mRobbins: [00:14:21] Kind of. Yeah. So I've dabbled. I'm not good at gravel, but it's yeah, but it's fun.

mWebber: [00:14:29] It's a blast. Yeah, I don't have a gravel bike anymore, but that's all right. What part of North Carolina are you on?

mRobbins: [00:14:36] I'm in Charlotte right now. Ok, yeah. So I went to school in Chapel Hill. I love that area. This area is a little less fun. There's some great gravel in western North Carolina.

mWebber: [00:14:47] Yeah, I'm familiar. I'm from Baltimore originally, so.

mRobbins: [00:14:50] Oh, cool.

mWebber: [00:14:52] Yeah.

mRobbins: [00:14:54] I've spent some time in Baltimore. My family bought a house on a golf course in Owings Mills. Oh yeah. Yeah. Random. But it was. It was beautiful.

mWebber: [00:15:05] Yeah. So what has been your experience with like bike fit in terms of? Well, in terms of of anything, footwear and just general experience,

mRobbins: [00:15:18] No, I was excited to see that question. So I've done a lot in terms of aerodynamics and bike fit, and I'm fairly flexible, so I've been able to get very aggressive in my position. And so that was kind of a fun area where I could push the envelope, right? It was like free speed. Yeah. And so I worked with Craig Upton in Mill Valley. Yeah, we talked to Craig Wright, right? Awesome.

mWebber: [00:15:45] He really is.

mRobbins: [00:15:47] Yeah, yeah, he's a good dude. He helped me a bunch and then I worked with a cyclist, a guy who like was a triathlon cycling coach, but had a big history in women's cycling out of New Zealand. And so he helped me a lot with my bike fit before Craig.

mWebber: [00:16:06] I think Craig from New Zealand as well, is he?

mRobbins: [00:16:09] He might be. I think you're right, Australia and New Zealand, some of those. That's funny. I know all the Kiwis. Yeah, I like the sense of humor that they bring their sense of humor. But yeah, so Craig Paul Buick was the guy before Craig. And then I did go to a couple of other bike fitters, but I can't really remember them. No one really stood out but really tried to push the envelope. And that makes such a big difference in terms of staying injury free. Even just cleat placement is so important.

mWebber: [00:16:41] Yeah, where I just learned this yesterday and I'm curious where. Is your cleat placed, is it more forward or more back? Or is it in the middle?

mRobbins: [00:16:54] So it's pretty squarely in the middle, and it actually looks like it might be a little bit further back. Right. So here's the the graph on the shoe, if that helps. Right? Yeah, it's pretty much perfectly in the middle. And I guess like, what is it? [00:17:11] If you move it back, maybe it recruits more of your like posterior chain of muscles like your glutes and hamstrings. [00:17:18] and core is more forward. Might be more quad.

mWebber: [00:17:22] I just learned this yesterday from someone else, I was doing this interview with him. He's a bike fitter and he is been advocating for these shoe companies to make the drill positions even further back.

mRobbins: [00:17:37] That's been a big, yeah, a big push as people moving their cleats further back and I'm looking at the works and these cleats. I took these on a gravel ride, and that's where they died. But these are like way far back on the shoe. Yeah, that's interesting.

mWebber: [00:17:53] Yeah, it is.

mRobbins: [00:17:54] You can get more power if you move them back.

mWebber: [00:17:56] Yeah, I wasn't. That was a part of fit. I never came across.

mRobbins: [00:18:01] Yeah, there's some cool fit tweaks.

mWebber: [00:18:03] So many, so many. I actually was certified as a bike fitter years ago, and I never I think I ended up fitting maybe two or three people. And that was it. Ok. My needs were always, you know, mechanical fix the bike, fix the bike.

mRobbins: [00:18:20] So, yeah, yeah, I feel like it's harder to get your name out in the fit world, but it's a it could be a good business if, yeah, if you get there.

mWebber: [00:18:28] Absolutely. Fortunately, not doing that at all anymore.

mRobbins: [00:18:31] So it's probably not quite as fun.

mWebber: [00:18:34] Yeah, that is actually why I'm in California at all. And while you and I ever met at AC,

mRobbins: [00:18:40] Really,

mWebber: [00:18:41] I came out for four specialized fit school. And on that trip from my shop in Baltimore, I happened to go into AC and Chad offered me a job.

mRobbins: [00:18:51] That's crazy. Oh my God, that's wild. And I will always remember the reason I went to AC was because of you, because I went to Kona and was like, just chatting with the Ceramicspeed guys. And they were like, Oh, you live in Northern California, you have to go with Michael. Because Michael's the best. Yeah, yeah.

mWebber: [00:19:10] Well, I'm glad this is recorded.

mRobbins: [00:19:14] I'm not just saying that, for the record.

mWebber: [00:19:16] No, that's awesome. Yeah, those guys are. Those guys are awesome.

mRobbins: [00:19:18] Paul and the guy with the mustache, right? Yeah. Yeah. Cool.

mWebber: [00:19:26] Now to the more kind of, I guess, delicate part of the conversation is from Bike Fit. It sounds like most of the fitters have been male.

mRobbins: [00:19:36] Oh yeah, I don't think there's any female fitters out there that I know of. I know of two. Yeah, and you're I'm sure you're cycling network is far broader than mine.

mWebber: [00:19:46] Yeah. How is that experience been in terms of comfort?

mRobbins: [00:19:50] And it's been fine. I don't think there's been. I mean, there are some female specific things like saddle is really important. Mm hmm. And then Craig, one of the reasons I went to him is because he had a heat mapping tool that was just like pressure sensitive where you put it on the saddle and it can tell like if your sit bones are in the right place. And that's really the only thing you have to get right. The difference between male and female is like how you interact with the saddle. Yeah, in my experience. But. Yeah, and most. Male fitters are just, you know, have been fine.

mWebber: [00:20:31] That's good. Yeah, I think I think I mean, at least in the training that I went through with it, I think they really emphasized like cognizance and the level of maturity and comfortability that everybody that does it's going to be

mRobbins: [00:20:44] Is going to have. Exactly. And I mean, I'm kind of more like, I have no shame and I'll talk to anyone about anything. So that doesn't bother me. But there's a lot of women out there who would probably have issues with going to a male fitter and feel like self-conscious about talking about certain things and stuff like that. So probably an area for improvement, but not one that really impacts my life. Yeah.

mWebber: [00:21:05] Well, I'm glad to hear that. What other questions do I have here? Well, I mean, what? What have you? Have you come across or experience any kind of gender disparities or inequities in triathlons? A little different because it's, you know, with racing, there's equal payout, I believe between.

mRobbins: [00:21:31] There is, I mean, and like with what was the recent tour, the women's race that just had a women's race in Europe

mWebber: [00:21:41] For the first time. It was it was two weeks ago. And this is part of the my kind of idea for this whole project.

mRobbins: [00:21:48] The inception. Yeah. Yeah. Cool, interesting. So I saw. I mean, obviously on Instagram, a bunch of great to see women's racing and cycling kind of equal that of men in terms of there is a women's race. But did you see the pay in that race?

mWebber: [00:22:05] I think it was five percent the men's.

mRobbins: [00:22:08] It's it's horrible. Like that doesn't even cover the cost of a plane ticket to go do the race.

mWebber: [00:22:15] Yeah. I think it was astronomically wrong, even the distance of the race. And granted, that race specifically

was probably historically one of the hardest races in European cycling ever. But the women's edition was, I think, less than half the distance.

mRobbins: [00:22:36] [00:22:36] Wow. That's that's offensive in and of itself. [00:22:39] Yeah. So that stuff bothers me, right? It's sad that we're there right now, and even in triathlon, it's an issue like pay is equal, which is amazing. Mm hmm. But with Iron Man, which controls most of the professional racing long course racing, [00:22:59] there are fewer slots at the World Championship race or historically have been. So they have 50 men and thirty five women. So pay is equal, but opportunity is still a little bit mismatch. [00:23:13]

mWebber: [00:23:13] Yeah, yeah, yeah. Back to the Paris-Roubaix. Even the depth of the pay, yeah, is like maybe 10 women compared to, I think, 30 positions for men.

mRobbins: [00:23:24] Yeah, that's so effed.

mWebber: [00:23:25] Yeah. Yeah. Ok, good. How would you like to see that address apart apart from like what? What mechanisms could you see it could happen to make that equal?

mRobbins: [00:23:40] Well, I think it has to come. Part of it's driven by eyeballs and sponsorship dollars, so like what can we do to change? It is like. [00:23:52] Put eyes on women's sports, [00:23:54] right, and it's something that happens throughout women's sports, not just cycling or triathlon, but looking at women's soccer, right? Yeah. [00:24:03] So it's an issue throughout society, [00:24:06] right? It's an issue and like not to get more meta, but like it's it is an issue and like thinking that I that's my day job and I make less than a man doing my job. Like, that's fucked up. So, yeah, so what do we do? I mean, we just have to keep advocating for it, and [00:24:23] women specifically have to advocate for themselves, [00:24:26] I think, as well. So. It's getting better. Look at me, I just like started a new job and they hired me while I was pregnant and gave me a great maternity leave and a great package like, that's cool, right? Yeah, that's

mWebber: [00:24:42] True.

mRobbins: [00:24:42] Ten years ago, it's amazing. Like, that wouldn't have happened 40 years ago or even 20. So it's it's improving, which gives me hope, I think. I'm really excited that you're focused on this as a man, right? And that's that's amazing, Michael.

mWebber: [00:24:59] So, but glad you think so.

mRobbins: [00:25:01] Yeah. But we all have to keep keep focused on it and it's improving. But there's still a long ways to go.

mWebber: [00:25:12] Because, yeah, I'm addressing this, [00:25:14] a trying to address this through cycling shoes, through cycling, because of the inequities in cycling. But I want this to be something that's going to maybe bring conversation, bring focus, bring awareness to the larger issue. [00:25:30]

mRobbins: [00:25:30] Yeah, yeah. I started answering the question about cycling and then it got broader and broader, and I didn't even realize I was going there.

mWebber: [00:25:41] But yeah, that's good. That's good. That's more kind of validation that this is a subject that can be addressed. Yeah. Whether or not it's a subject that should or can be addressed via a pair of cycling shoes, I'm not sure. My my initial idea for it is

akin to like the red iPhones. Yeah, right. Why is your phone red? Is that special? Is it just a color? No, there's actually a story behind it.

mRobbins: [00:26:06] Yeah, I love it.

mWebber: [00:26:09] I hope hope that that's my hope is to have a shoe that isn't necessarily specifically a women's shoe, either, [00:26:17] because I don't think only women should be making this argument that these improvements need to be made. [00:26:23]

mRobbins: [00:26:23] Yeah. Well, and you nailed it when you were talking about the what is it, SIDI shoes? The C, yeah, yeah. And width, right? You can make shoes that fit a variety of people, men and women, right? With specifications, maybe. Yeah. So so it's there definitely needs to be more diversity in the sport.

mWebber: [00:26:46] I think that's another you're giving me all these awesome segues. Well, any of those shoes that you have of all those cycling shoes you have, are any of them women's specific?

mRobbins: [00:27:00] I don't think they make. I mean, let me think about that. I guess SIDI does make a women specific shoe, some a lot of them do. Specialize makes like a women specific helmet with a ponytails slot that's in a different place. Do I buy any of those? No. Because oftentimes [00:27:20] they just shrink it and pink it [00:27:21]

mWebber: [00:27:22] Yeah, yeah. From my understanding. I think all of those things are just subsets of shrink it and pink it. Yeah. I don't think any of the shoes, I mean, the men's helmet have what they call the hairnet as well or that Hairport.

mRobbins: [00:27:40] That's why, as I said, as I was saying and I was like, This is bullshit. Yeah, yeah.

mWebber: [00:27:46] Do you think there should be a women's specific shoe?

mRobbins: [00:27:50] Yeah, if technologically it makes sense. Sure. I think that you can get there by just providing a shoe that has specifications for women's feet, right and or power needs. And maybe you get there and maybe cleat placement. I don't know if that would differ for women at all, but it could.

mWebber: [00:28:09] Well, what I'm finding, as well as actually in the relationship I'm in right now, she rides and we basically transition shoes all the time. Yeah, shoes that I've had that didn't work out. She she she's like, Oh, I'll wear those and they fit her fine.

mRobbins: [00:28:28] That's great.

mWebber: [00:28:29] Yeah, yeah. But it's like, Well, what what? What is the difference? Is there any difference? I don't know. So it's definitely something worth exploring, I think.

mRobbins: [00:28:38] Yeah. And I used to do that. I had similar sized feet with my the boyfriend that was really into bonds. And so we would just share even clothes. We could share it. So and there's not that much difference in cycling clothes either.

mWebber: [00:28:53] Yeah, no, no. I agree. Bibs, you know where the the chami's place?

mRobbins: [00:28:59] Yeah, it's placement, depending on the brand, can be a little bit different.

mWebber: [00:29:03] But yeah, it's really tough because everyone is a little different shapes. Everyone's everyone's different. There's no standard. So yeah,

mRobbins: [00:29:11] Yeah. And this conversation does segue into cycling clothes as well. And I actually worked with Chad when he was trying to build out that women's specific cycling brand.

mWebber: [00:29:22] Was he doing a women's specific cycling brand?

mRobbins: [00:29:24] He was doing a cycling brand with a big push into women's because mainly because he saw the market opportunity. Yeah. And that's the other side of the coin. Like, yes, gender inequality is a huge issue, and that should be the driver. But it's a tiny percentage of the market right now, and there's a huge room for growth as well.

mWebber: [00:29:45] Huge. And you know, you know, marketing statistics often say that that women are like that. The controller of the purse in people's households, Yeah, oh yeah. And they are interested in cycling.

mRobbins: [00:30:00] Yes, exactly. Yeah. The more women we can get out there, the better. So I'm all for that.

mWebber: [00:30:06] Yeah, same. This has been fantastic. Do you have any other questions or anything?

mRobbins: [00:30:17] No, I'd love to follow along. So like, if there's a way for you to send me updates, will do.

mWebber: [00:30:22] Will do. It's definitely I definitely feel like I'm going over my head a little bit with this project.

mRobbins: [00:30:30] It's like the tip of the iceberg.

mWebber: [00:30:32] I know. So part of it's like I all the other classes up to now have been like, design this for this subset of the market or whatever. So I'm like, my first question is class like, I see a lot of these shoes that are being designed and they have some message behind them like, what does that even mean? So I've been like all over the place and I'm like, Well, no, actually, I'm accidentally happening upon this larger issue. And like I'm trying to figure out how to apply that to a shoe.

mRobbins: [00:31:03] Yeah, and I mean, there's so much there, right? And so I think the easiest way to apply it to a shoe is to [00:31:08] [make little specifications for diversity](#), [00:31:11] right? And women and men. But then there's also this broader issue. And like, I don't know how to address it with shoes, but yeah, yeah.

mWebber: [00:31:19] Does does a symbol like like the red iPhone does a symbol of light like that? Is that help?

mRobbins: [00:31:27] [00:31:27] [It does that helps a lot that actually kind of made it resonate, so](#) [00:31:31] I think that's a really good example. Yeah.

mWebber: [00:31:34] So shoe that is, you know, has enough marketing behind it that people will identify as like, Oh, that is that that gender equity shoe?

mRobbins: [00:31:42] Yes, exactly. Exactly. And I mean, branding is really big, right? As well. And you touched on that when you were

talking about other shoes. So I brought these these are like my favorite work shoe, right? Jimmy Choo. They're nice. But then like, here's another issue that you could possibly weave in and it's heels. I mean, heels were made so popular they look great, but they were made to like, basically put women at a disadvantage. Mm hmm. Right. They were made like, make it harder for a woman to walk. And yet here we are still wearing them. Why do you wear them? Why? For fashion, for looks and because everyone does. Yeah. Right, so I don't know how to weave that in or where you want to go with it, but it's a bigger issue.

mWebber: [00:32:27] Absolutely. Yeah, I think I asked you what your favorite pair of Manolo Blahniks are.

mRobbins: [00:32:32] Yeah. And so I don't have any in my closet, but these are my favorite pair of Jimmy Choos and similar to Manolos. Yeah. So they have like a little Manolos have a little bling on them right here. Yeah. So similar to these, these are my like bling

mWebber: [00:32:49] That Jimmy Choo is your source of bunions, most likely.

mRobbins: [00:32:52] Oh, you nailed it! I know. I don't wear them very much anymore. Yeah.

mWebber: [00:32:59] Yeah, I kind of. I had my eyes open to like women's fashion wear shoes when someone noticed the saddle on my old bike had this red red underbody and this woman like, Oh, there's the like Christian Louboutins. I'm like, What's that? And I looked it up. I'm like, Wow, that's fascinating history and just awesome stuff. And it started making me look into more fashion footwear. I'm like, This is years ago. I've always sort of had an appreciation for what I find is more interesting. Shoes that are on women's feet as opposed

mRobbins: [00:33:31] To it's amazing, and it's actually like really high end design. Yes. Yeah. Louboutin's I have actually a rounded toe pair of Louboutins. I don't know where they are right now because I do cross country, but they're they're beautiful, right? Yeah. Yeah, it's cool. Well, I really respect what you're doing, Michael. This is super cool and really impactful, so you're asking all the right questions.

mWebber: [00:33:56] I'm really glad to hear that these are it's it's definitely me getting out of my comfort zone, and I'm glad to hear you say that it's super helpful and encouraging. Cool. If I come up with any other follow ups, I'll reach out to you.

mRobbins: [00:34:12] Yeah, shoot me a note. Or, you know, or is there on Instagram or I think you have my contact info, but happy to help.

mWebber: [00:34:18] I appreciate it.

mRobbins: [00:34:19] Cool and look forward to staying in touch. So keep me in the know on this. Ok?

mWebber: [00:34:24] Will do

mRobbins: [00:34:25] Awesome. Thanks, man. Good to see you.

mWebber: [00:34:27] You too. Take care.

mRobbins: [00:34:28] Bye bye.

Interview Julie Bates

Subject: Cycling Shoes & Equity
Conducted: Monday, October 18th, 2021, 10:30am
Participant: Julie Bates
Age: 63
Region: Bay Area, CA
Cycling history: late start to riding, competition in mountain biking and cyclocross, works in retail industry
Profession: Certified Retül Fit Specialist
Online Presence: <https://www.julieabates.com/>
Shoe size: 40.5
Pronouns: she, her, hers
Zoom recording: video 1967989648.mp4
Duration: 41:23



mWebber: [00:00:03] I appreciate it. Well, great, thank you for taking the time for this. I can give you a little background. I'm sure you're a little curious as well, if you'd like.

jBates: [00:00:13] Ok.

mWebber: [00:00:15] Basically, I used to be a mechanic, worked all over the country and kind of retired on that and went back to school, still having quite a bit of influence interest in cycling. I wanted to do a project on in the cycling world still. Mm hmm. So that's where I'm at now. And in my experience as a mechanic, I went to specialized and got the BG Fit certification. Everything. And I believe that's where I met you one time, and I believe Johnny May referenced you a few times as well.

jBates: [00:00:52] He's an awesome guy. Yeah, he's an awesome dude.

mWebber: [00:00:54] Yeah, yeah. He wasn't sure if he he if he would remember him, but oh,

jBates: [00:00:59] I do not remember him.

mWebber: [00:01:01] He's he's iconic, right?

jBates: [00:01:04] He totally is. He totally is. Yeah, that's cool.

mWebber: [00:01:11] So in terms of this project, I wanted to reach out to as many people as I could and get kind of feedback. And like I said, your answers on that survey were were helpful and understanding your background as I believe you are as well as a fit technician, right?

jBates: [00:01:31] I'm a certified Retül fit instructor. I fit. I taught fit for eight years. It Specialized and was a fitter in a bike shop in San Francisco for three years. And now I'm currently sitting in a bike shop in Santa Cruz. I got I got laid off because of COVID. I couldn't teach. And they're like, see yal

mWebber: [00:01:55] Wonderful. That was a Specialized?

jBates: [00:01:58] Yeah. Oh yeah. Yeah, yeah.

mWebber: [00:02:02] Good old Sinyard. Right?

jBates: [00:02:04] Yeah. Yeah.

mWebber: [00:02:06] So you're still doing bike fit?

jBates: [00:02:09] Yes, absolutely.

mWebber: [00:02:10] Yeah, this is awesome. Basically, so the heart of my project is it's a footwear design class and keeping with cycling, like I was saying, I wanted to design a shoe. And a lot of it has to do with with equity, cycling, equity in sport between the genders. And. Not necessarily, not sure if I want to design a women's specific cycling shoe, that's part of what I would like to talk with you about is your experience with women's specific cycling shoes, but also just equity in the sport as well. If you've experienced that at all and the result of the shoe that I want to design is going to be largely in bringing awareness to potential inequities or existing inequities in inequality in the sport. Ok, cool. Does that make sense?

jBates: [00:03:10] Yes, because all of those things occur or have occurred or have evolved within our sport and continue to evolve. So having been in the industry now for what, 12 years or something, god awful like that, I have seen a lot of evolution with regard to women and how to create product for women. How to design products for women. Is there a need? So that's that's a good question, women's or men's specific product, and I think, yeah, and I think working at Specialized when we were going through this entire process is really was extremely helpful in me understanding when it's appropriate and when it's not because there's definitely times when it's very appropriate and times when it's not necessary. [00:04:08] So and with shoes, anatomically speaking, men and women do not have different feet. [00:04:18] Yes, men are typically larger humans, so their feet are bigger, but our feet are very unique. And there.

mWebber: [00:04:32] Individual, really,

jBates: [00:04:33] And anatomically between. Yeah, there's no there's no difference between genders. There's just anatomical in.

The people who went through this, I remember the women manager coming up and saying, Hey, don't women have narrow? Narrower heels. It's like not real husband has really narrow heels, and he'll buy quote women specific shoes because of that because they have a narrower heel at that time. But there are definitely times when gender specific, particularly in apparel, it's very appropriate to have gender specific product in apparel. Eight reasons why

[00:05:24] We. Benefit from not having.

jBates: [00:05:31] Are you breaking [00:05:32] gender specific? And don't. Because there are smaller markets. [00:05:45] Yeah. Of markets. When we went to that specialize, when we went to one. And then suspect. I you're breaking up a lot. Ok, let me try going outside. Hold on. Sure. The door, that's probably why is this better? Can you hear me now?

mWebber: [00:06:15] Yeah.

jBates: [00:06:17] Ok, I'll just sit by the door. Maybe that's the what we need to do.

mWebber: [00:06:21] Sorry. No worries. No worries. It was just a little and out there.

jBates: [00:06:26] Ok, what would you like me to repeat it? Or do you want me to repeat it?

mWebber: [00:06:31] Um, that I think I think you were about to say something about you, I kind of last heard you on apparel that there is actually specificity to women's apparel. Yes.

jBates: [00:06:45] Ok. Agreed there is there is definitely a need in the sport of cycling for men's and women's specific apparel. Uh, the way padding is placed in chamois. Well, you know, the width of shoulders, you know, things like that, yes, it's appropriate then anatomically, [00:07:08] but with shoes, we just didn't see any reason to create men's and women's specific shoes. I think they still do, but there wasn't any anatomical reason for it. [00:07:21]

mWebber: [00:07:22] Um, mostly aesthetic, I think, right?

jBates: [00:07:24] Yes. Mostly aesthetic. Exactly.

mWebber: [00:07:28] That is that's what I've been finding with with the people I've been talking to. I'm curious what people's reaction are have have been when they've had women specific shoes, if they were not aware that it was aesthetic or if there was actually any kind of anatomical physiological difference?

jBates: [00:07:49] Yeah, no. You know, you put on a men's shoe or a women's shoe. You're not going to feel a difference. [00:08:00] They're built on the same last. [00:08:01] So it's purely it's purely aesthetics, I would I would assume, you know, at least in my experience. Yeah.

mWebber: [00:08:12] So you you just shifting gears a little bit more specific to you. You ride. I believe your you answered mountain biking. Mostly, yes. Yes. How long you been writing,

jBates: [00:08:26] Riding and racing for? I don't know, 20ish years, I guess. I started late. I started in my 40s, took it seriously. Yeah, started riding and racing in my forties.

mWebber: [00:08:38] What? What got you into it?

jBates: [00:08:42] Oh gosh. I got a road bike. I spent \$500 and couldn't bear to see it sitting in my garage because that was a lot of money and started riding a road bike and it was OK. And then I entered a mountain bike race and borrowed my mom's old Costco mountain bike, and I was [00:09:04] absolutely hooked for life. [00:09:05] It was totally awesome. Came in last, didn't care. It's [00:09:10] so much fun and [00:09:11] went out and bought up my own mountain bike and [00:09:14] it was life changing. [00:09:15] It truly was life changing for me. I got out of a crappy marriage and into a really marvelous one, and it's completely life changing, so. Can't thank mountain biking enough for that?

mWebber: [00:09:29] Bicycles definitely have a have that ability. I know I've have been affected heavily by bikes. You know, you kind of alluded to the pains of the bike industry, you know, working as a mechanic or in whatever capacity and that sort of retail side of bikes. It's it's a hard it can be a hard life. Yeah. But with that, it also has a lot of satisfaction.

jBates: [00:09:54] I agree. I agree, [00:09:55] especially with fit because it's such a personal service. [00:09:59] Yeah, it can be very [00:10:01] satisfying to help people understand. [00:10:05] that there are there are cyclists. You know, you put your leg over a bike and you enjoy it and you love it. You're a cyclist because a lot of people think, Well, you don't have to be really good at it. It's like, No, you don't. You just put your leg over the top tube and go, have fun and you're a cyclist. And [00:10:20] it's lovely to change their opinions about themselves, their perception and help them understand that they totally fit into that community that they've just entered and to go out and have a good time with it. [00:10:33]

mWebber: [00:10:33] So, yeah, I know since I've gone back to school, I'm not as involved with the bike shops and riding even as much. I've taken a new philosophy on bikes and I'm not competing. I'm not trying to be good anymore. I'm just trying to ride and use the bike as sort of an escape, you know, head clearing and yeah.

jBates: [00:10:54] Absolutely, absolutely. There with you. Yeah, I love how [00:10:57] it evolves. As your needs change in your life. [00:11:00] you evolve your cycling to fit into how it works best for you. And that's the wonderful thing. That's why [00:11:07] it's a lifelong sport. [00:11:08] because you can do that with it.

mWebber: [00:11:11] Yeah, it's it's incredible. So back to the project. A little bit part of my initial start on this was was interested in having sort of an aesthetically pleasing cycling shoe as well, sort of akin to more of a fashion shoe, which is why I asked those questions in the survey. What is it that you like about Blundstones?

jBates: [00:11:37] Oh, interesting. Yeah, I I like the [00:11:40] durability. I like the clean lines that really haven't changed in decades. [00:11:46] They created a product that is well done and they really haven't had to modify it. You know, it's kind of [00:11:55] timeless in [00:11:55] that way. Yeah, it's just, you know, it has a really good reputation lobally for just being a really solid product and they're comfortable.

mWebber: [00:12:07] You were not the only one that mentioned Blundstones,

jBates: [00:12:10] And that's really interesting. Yeah. Yeah, I think they're having a renaissance right now. People have just like myself where we've just discovered this really cool, really cool product that originated in Tasmania like that alone is cool, you know?

mWebber: [00:12:26] So interesting. Yeah, I didn't know they were from Tasmania.

jBates: [00:12:30] Yep, yep, absolutely.

mWebber: [00:12:33] What was it like assuming you've probably went through a number of Specialized cycling shoes? Oh yeah, there. Are you still wearing them or have you migrated on another brand?

jBates: [00:12:46] Both I've migrated as well as still wear them. So and I've found comfort comfort in other brands as well. I still like I still like the built in benefit of ergonom, the ergonomic benefit of Specialized product over the others. They're smart to have patented that because it's pretty powerful, you know? So, yeah, I've worn both.

mWebber: [00:13:17] What do you like? I guess what specifically about the Specialized fit, like the foot beds?

jBates: [00:13:25] I like the [00:13:26] **varus support in the fore foot.** [00:13:29] That's right. I'd have to say that general fit has gotten uncomfortable. I have really narrow feet, low volume, narrow feet, and they're narrow on me. I'm like, How do other people wear these comfortably? You know, they've kind of gone astray. I think of it through all their different product teams because they they roll through a lot of turnover there. And they had they had originated a kind of a larger shoe box, a more comfortable fit. And then they decided that they wanted [00:14:05] **to get more streamlined and more of a racing fit.** [00:14:11] And I think I got a bit too narrow to be honest with. Like, I ended up with a lot of those a bunion or a corn on one foot, which is crazy because I have really narrow feet. It's like, Wow, yeah,

mWebber: [00:14:27] That is curious, especially. I mean, the blood stones themselves don't seem to be particularly narrow. No, no. To receive bunions from cycling shoes seems.

jBates: [00:14:38] Yeah, yeah, it was crazy. Surprising. Yeah, it was their women's road shoe one one season because I had to wear their product at work and we went out for rides in classes, and so I had to wear it out every day. And yeah, that particular year, I ended up with a nice bunion on the side of my foot and it was the only, yeah, I know. And that's that's the bumper part because they have such a wonderful product with the arch support built into the shoe and the varus wedge, and they always had a wider toe box because then you could put in wedges and support inside the shoe. It was important to them when they designed it, and [00:15:21] **they seem to have gotten away from that.** [00:15:23] And, you know, and I find that to be a detriment to the product. Maybe they'll someday evolve back to it, who knows.

mWebber: [00:15:31] But it is interesting how these brands. I will say, Specialized definitely guilty of it of sort of changing their product and things like I always gripe about the Romin saddle. It's been my favorite forever, and they do these little minor tweaks to it that that does affect the end user. And I don't understand why.

jBates: [00:15:55] It's like, how about the old adage, if it ain't broke, don't fix it, right? How about that? You know, you don't have to evolve every product just because that's what you innovate or die. I mean, you really don't have to do that.

mWebber: [00:16:09] I hated that. I hated that, that that campaign of theirs.

jBates: [00:16:12] And to me, too, it's so dumb. I agree

mWebber: [00:16:18] Regarding so. So in terms of when you're selecting a pair of shoes for cycling, where do you look like in terms of markets? I mean, you obviously have a community, you've got influence in the industry. So that seems like you're just exposed to all that. Are you exposed to marketing anywhere else? Do you follow your friends or.

jBates: [00:16:41] Yeah, I mean, I'm not I don't really like I don't go on Pinkbike very often. I look at BRAIN honestly, mostly for information, Velonews, maybe a little bit. So I'm not I'm probably not going to give you any wonderful insight into marketing or where what excites me about a product that I see in marketing.

mWebber: [00:17:07] When do you when do you make the decision to buy a new pair of shoes?

jBates: [00:17:12] When I [00:17:14] **wear out a pair of shoes** [00:17:15] and before I would just buy the same product because I pretty much had to. And [00:17:19] **how I am able to buy whatever I want. And that's been fun.** [00:17:25] to be honest with you. Then go try on different things and and realize that there's a whole new world out there that that makes really nice product. So that part's been cool. But how do I get there? Good question. Friends looking at what they're wearing, what their influence. Trail mountain biking has a very specific look about it, which is interesting and it has very specific shoe needs. So that style of shoe is pretty specific for that sport in in mountain biking. So you'll see the popular brands out there over and over and over with the product tires, shoes, shorts, all of it. Yeah.

mWebber: [00:18:14] This is just actually, oddly enough, just popped in my head, there's no real difference between the the road shoe and a mountain shoe, right? Just the only difference is that the outsole, the tread,

jBates: [00:18:26] The the tread is very different because of the cleat interface on the mountain bike. As far as the last for the two, they're built on different lasts? Good question. I don't think so.

mWebber: [00:18:40] Ok, yeah, that's what I mean. Obviously, the tread is obviously different, but above the upper and the midsole and everything.

jBates: [00:18:50] Yeah, upper materials are very different and the tread is very different. But I think the actual shoe itself, the sole of the shoe, the last, I don't think it's different. Yeah, but I don't know. That's that's an opinion. I don't I don't know for sure about that.

mWebber: [00:19:10] Um, how much does look go into your shoe choices like aesthetics or is it mostly 90? You know, 90 percent fit,

jBates: [00:19:21] 90 percent fit. You know, to me, it's like, just don't be garish. We have some. It's funny. The shop I work at, we have some shoes that were brought in for extra wide feet and I pulled some out of the box and it was like the silver silver space suit all the way around. Like, it was like, Oh no, we'll never sell these.

mWebber: [00:19:49] Do you remember the brand? Was it a Bont?

jBates: [00:19:50] Yes, it was. It was really always so ugly. Lake it was Lake cycling.

mWebber: [00:19:59] Ok, Lake.

jBates: [00:20:00] All right. Yeah, yeah.

mWebber: [00:20:02] Um. In your experience and career as a cyclist, how much have you been exposed to? I think you alluded to this a bit. You may have broken up a bit, but any kind of inequalities that you can speak to in terms of gender issues in cycling.

jBates: [00:20:18] Yeah. Where should we start? Where would you like to start?

mWebber: [00:20:24] Well, whatever you feel comfortable with,

jBates: [00:20:26] I'll start with racing as a female cyclist, racing. [00:20:31] We always had to fight with promoters to give us the same categories as men because [00:20:41] like, we're all amateurs and we're racing an age group, right? Yeah. And you know, they would have all of these five year age groups for the guys, but then they would only have thirty five plus or under thirty five for the women. So I'm a I'm a 50 year old athlete racing someone who's 35, and this would happen every single race. And so we would we would always have to defend ourselves and say, look, if only three people show up for that category. Isn't it nice for people to race their peers and not someone who's 15 years or 20 years younger and they just didn't buy into it? And that was always our struggle, and I think that's gotten better since I don't race anymore, but it's always been an inequity. Yeah, they never would take our. They [00:21:32] wouldn't take us as serious. [00:21:34] and wouldn't like if the dudes would have a race, you know, it'd be like an announcer and all that stuff. And then when the women would race, it would be like, Hey, let's go, let's go get some coffee. But that is changing, too. Like the they have women announcing. I went to nationals many times and they always treated us pretty, pretty fairly at the national national racing level. I didn't feel any inequities there. It was the local scene. They just they just didn't understand. And that's gotten better as far as working in the cycling industry. Oh, [00:22:15] we could go on for hours about the problems within the industry [00:22:21] and how they really [00:22:22] don't know how to market to women [00:22:24] because they [00:22:25] don't know how to treat women in [00:22:27] their own industry. So it's a big problem. Yeah, big problem. And I don't know if they'll ever have all of the outdoor industry. [00:22:37] Cycling is the most backwards when it comes to equity and diversity. [00:22:43] They are absolutely Neanderthalic. If that's the word,

mWebber: [00:22:48] I think it is. I definitely understand your intention at that word. Why do you think it is?

jBates: [00:22:55] Because [00:22:56] it's all about being a white fast guy. [00:22:59] That's the whole culture within the industry is being a white fast guy. I've seen a lot of white fast guys get promoted with absolutely no skill set to be promoted into a position. Um, I've seen really qualified people not ever get a promotion. Because they weren't a fast white guy.

mWebber: [00:23:24] And fast white guys sell product, right?

jBates: [00:23:26] Right, and I'm not saying that because I'm a bitter ex-employee of a manufacturing company and cycling. I'm saying that because I saw it all the time.

mWebber: [00:23:35] No, I I can. I can relate. Yeah, yeah. Being a slow white guy. Yeah, I've never. I used to race cyclocross back east than when I lived in Louisville, Kentucky. And that's irrelevant. But I've seen both sides of it. I've definitely seen the the

inequities in racing. And that was sort of the inception of this kind of direction of the product project was Paris-Roubaix a couple of weeks ago.

jBates: [00:24:09] Yeah, yep.

mWebber: [00:24:11] Amazing that the had of women's edition of that finally, after 118 years.

jBates: [00:24:16] Right?

mWebber: [00:24:18] But what a diminished course and what a diminished, you know, payout and yeah.

jBates: [00:24:24] ...and coverage. There was hardly any coverage. And [00:24:27] the UCI, they are probably the absolute worst of any sporting federation for equity for [00:24:35] against fast white guys. Yeah. It starts. There, and it just continues throughout the entire culture of the cycling industry. And yeah, it's ridiculous. And you go race, and here's the thing, like I've raised cyclocross in Holland and I've the fields, the women's fields were huge, like 50 women my age racing right as an older master's athlete. And then you go to Belgium. We went and raced worlds there, and they didn't even have women's categories I had to race. This was awful. [00:25:14] I had to race in the juniors with the junior, the juniors, which sucked because these kids take it super serious. [00:25:22] It's their ticket out of their little farm, their little farm town, because it's such a big sport there and it was just ridiculous. You go over the border and you, you know, night and day.

mWebber: [00:25:35] Wow. I didn't know there'd be that much of a distinction between Belgium and the Netherlands.

jBates: [00:25:39] Oh, it was. It was. It was crazy. It was very shocking. Very shocking. Belgium is very, very conservative. It kind of reminds me of the U.S. in the 50s or the 40s, and that was in the 2000s.

mWebber: [00:25:54] Yeah, yeah. I've heard it equated as not knowing where you're originally from, but equated to West Virginia. When I lived in Maryland and Kentucky, West Virginia's between them in both states would kind of ridicule West Virginia for being very backwards.

jBates: [00:26:14] Yeah, same thing. Yeah, sounds the same. Yeah. Where are you from originally, Julie? Bay Area, California Yeah.

mWebber: [00:26:22] Yeah, I've only recently moved here about five years ago. I got a job at Above Category cycling.

jBates: [00:26:31] Oh, cool. And Marin, right? Yeah.

mWebber: [00:26:33] Yeah, that's what caused me to move out here. And that was like a great move to be a bike mechanic to kind of move to that type of a shop. Mm hmm. But it was shortly thereafter made me realize that it's just another bike shop. Right? So and that's where I was like, Well, I need to do something different and I don't want to leave bikes. I love bikes, but I was like, I need to elevate something else in my life, and that's why I left and went to school.

jBates: [00:27:03] I think that's that's really commendable and congratulations because at a certain point, [00:27:09] you get sick of the vow of poverty as well. [00:27:11] especially in the Bay Area, like you just cannot cannot survive on bike shop wages in the Bay Area know like you can't even rent a room in San Francisco on bike shop wages. So I don't know how people do it.

mWebber: [00:27:26] I don't know how I did it either.

jBates: [00:27:28] Right? It's just awful.

mWebber: [00:27:31] Just beautiful. Who? Who do you look up to in the kind of in the arena of women's equity in cycling?

jBates: [00:27:40] Good question. Wow. [00:27:43] **There are some really wonderful women who work at Specialized who are still fighting the good fight.** [00:27:51] and I commend them because they've somehow managed to be heard within that culture and they are my heroes. You know, there are the unspoken heroes who are still banging away at it, [00:28:06] **trying to be heard sitting in the meetings and being talked over.** [00:28:09] You know, they're still there trying to do the right thing. And they're they're pretty, pretty amazing humans. Very, very stubborn, very smart. And I have much respect for them.

mWebber: [00:28:22] That is good to know. Yeah, I'm glad they're there as well. Yep. Yeah, um, in terms of this specific project, I keep going back to my iPhone, I've got this red iPhone and it's that **(PRODUCT)RED** campaign. Are you familiar with it?

jBates: [00:28:44] I am not. I'm sorry. I'm not. It's OK, it's OK.

mWebber: [00:28:47] But basically it's a unique looking iPhone looks like any old iPhone, but it's red, and they've done this campaign that proceeds from this specific phone go towards AIDS research in Africa, AIDS and HIV research in Africa. And that was sort of kind of my idea of kind of mimicking some campaign like that with this shoe making an extremely unique looking cycling shoe that is meant to bring awareness to these, these gender inequities in the industry and kind of larger, larger picture of the inequities of, you know, gender differences in society at large. How is something like that? Would that resonate with with with you? Do you think?

jBates: [00:29:35] I think that would resonate with every female in the cycling industry and very much so, yes. Because now is a good time because of what's been happening in the past, politically within the last five years, the #MeToo movement, there's a lot of awareness right now, and I think it's the perfect time for a campaign like that that within the cycling with the women's Tour de France, with the women's Paris-Roubaix, there's these changes that are occurring right now and you couldn't ask for better timing. It's pretty cool.

mWebber: [00:30:14] I'm glad I getting good. But what I fear is it's just I don't want it to be just some, some ignored symbol or some overlooked. I don't want to appear placating at all. I don't want it to be just this, you know, measly symbol of something that no one's going to notice. Because that's what I especially don't want to contribute to is the the I'm surprised you haven't said it yet because everyone else has spoken to has. When I referenced women's apparel and cycling shoes is when people say shrink it and pink it. It's an adage I've heard over and over regarding anything that Specialized has done, but I don't really feel like they've done anything other than shrink it and pink it in terms of cycling shoes specifically. And yeah, in some regards bikes.

jBates: [00:31:09] Let me let me tell you why I didn't say pink it and shrink it, and it's because it Specialized moved past that and beyond it. Believe it or not, we. And it has to do with bike fit they had. We bought Retül by getting motion capture company and they had thousands and thousands of data points from fits. We had Body Geometry. We had thousands and thousands of data points from our fits. And they did. They did the analysis and that what they found

was there was [00:31:45] **no differences between genders.** [00:31:49] There are [00:31:49] **just differences within genders.** [00:31:52] So my point about shoes, about feet, right? So they realize like, we don't have to shrink it and pink it. We're just going to make the best product that we can for the the. Customer in that, let's say, size, range, size fifty two. Ok. Most people who ride a 52 bike are smaller. There are typically women, so we're going to stock a one fifty five saddle, which is a wider saddle and a 40 bar, which is a narrower bar. It's going to piss off the two percent of men who have to go now swap out a bar. But oh well, you know, oh well and benefit. The [00:32:36] **benefit of that was women were had the option to buy a product that had the highest end components where before they didn't.** [00:32:46] if they went with women specific, they would not have an opportunity to buy a bike with the best componentry more often than not. And I remember I wanted they built women specific full suspension bike called the Ryme, and they never made a carbon version. And it was always like, Why? You know, no big. You know, carbon is the thing. Everyone wants a carbon mountain bike, and you just came out with an alloy, full suspension, heavy women's bike so that that doesn't happen as much anymore because now they're just going to build one bike.

jBates: [00:33:20] It's going to be the best bike they can spec and out the door with it. So women now have that benefit of getting the best product available, and it's not pink and it's not shrunken. It's just the best product so Specialized. Because they had so much data, they had the confidence to move past the pink it and shrink it. So I'm going to I'm going to defend them forever about that because it was a really bold move because they were the first ones to go female specific, right? Yeah, because that's what they did at the time, because that's all the information they had and it was all based basically on kind of folklore. Nobody really had any anatomical data. [00:34:03] **They looked at old anatomical data from the military.** [00:34:07] you know, I mean, it was crazy. That's all they could get their hands on in the industry. And now, you know, we had all the data, we had it, so we used it. I say we it's funny, they used it, and I'm going to be really proud of what they did. I'm going to stand up for them in that regard because they did a big service towards service, towards serving women with that, with that move. So. But yes, the whole industry still believes in the shrink it and pink it like the whole LIV is now, they're doing a very great job of having women's racing and women's specific product, and they're still in that stage of the evolution, but they're doing a great job of it, which is cool. They're getting a lot of exposure for women, which is cool.

mWebber: [00:34:55] Uh, yeah, part of this process of this project was. Choosing, choosing sort of someone that's, you know, elevated. Whatever untouchable someone, you're not going to interact with someone you're not going to reach out and have an interview it'd be rad, if I could, but. And I actually was doing some reading and going back to my, you know, appreciation recycling. I looked at Marianne Vos and she's a huge advocate for this. Just, you reminded me when you mentioned LIV. So she is doing some amazing things as well. One last question regarding your survey. What did you mean by material breaking down and rolling inward? Was that on the heel material? I think you said

jBates: [00:35:42] It was interesting. So my the shoe that I wear from Specialized for trail riding is called a 2FO. Ok. And I remember this the cuff around the heel. The heel cuff from sliding your foot into that shoe. That heel cuff is kind of a thick material back there. And it I think it gets pushed in when you're pushing your foot in. I think it brings that kind of heel cut material with it. And so it starts to flatten and roll in. And I've seen it in my shoes. I've seen it, my husband shoes. We both wear that style same shoe. And it's annoying. It's like, God, you know, [00:36:27] **you pay a lot of**

money for this. And this isn't even lasting a year and it's breaking down. [00:36:32] And and that's a gripe. I hear a lot from customers in the shop, too. It's like I spent four hundred dollars for this pair of shoes, and I want it to last like Blondstones, right? I want it to last as long as a pair of Blundstones, a product like that, and they just don't appear to last that long like SIDs used to last forever. I don't know if they still do, but people would come in with these slippers basically on their feet. I just get so worn out. So, you know, but people love them because they're crazy, comfortable, you know? But yeah, I don't. I just seems like there's this trend to the manufacturers. I don't know if they're cutting corners or just I don't know what their deal is, but I'm hearing the complaints about [00:37:22] spending a lot of money and not getting a product that last very long. [00:37:25]

mWebber: [00:37:25] Yeah. What size shoe do you wear?

jBates: [00:37:28] I am a 40 and a half. Okay.

mWebber: [00:37:33] Just don't want to forget that one very critical question. Well, Julie, this has been fantastic. Are you up for any kind of follow ups at all if I if I come up with any follow up questions?

jBates: [00:37:46] Sure. Thank you for thank you for allowing me to do this. I appreciate it.

mWebber: [00:37:50] Your thank you very much. This is amazing amount of information. This is going to help a lot. Cool. And I really, really appreciate it. Part part of product design is, you know, listening to potential customers and knowing what people want. Right, right. So that is part of this. The education that I'm getting is reaching out to people and, you know, listening. I think it's a huge part. I think it's one of the things that made me a good mechanic when I was a mechanic. So I understand that and it does come naturally to me, but I appreciate anybody that's willing to give me their personal perspective.

jBates: [00:38:34] So thank you. Thank you for asking. And more importantly, thank you for. Caring about the inequity in our industry. It's people like you, men like you, who are advocates for women that are going to help evolve the rest of the industry. So we need more of you. So thank you.

mWebber: [00:38:56] My absolutely my pleasure. To that point, I'll just relate a quick story. I remember having this discussion about politics and see that this is this thing is I don't believe it's just cycling. Obviously, we all know not just cycling, but you know, we got a lot

of issues and problems with this world right now. And men have been at the helm for centuries. And maybe, maybe, maybe we wouldn't be in quite the issues and pickles that we're in if we listen to the rest of the population. Right? I agree. Right. So the problem? [00:39:34] We believe women deserve a seat at the table and I believe they need a seat at the helm. [00:39:39]

jBates: [00:39:40] Yeah, thank you. I do, too, because it's broke and it needs to be fixed and doing the same thing is not fixing it. And it's like all these old white guys that are in their eighties still out there running our government. They got to, they got to go and they just got to retire. [00:39:55] We need to have leadership that looks like us. [00:39:58] You know,

mWebber: [00:39:59] That's it's like very well put.

jBates: [00:40:01] Yeah, I mean, it doesn't look like us. They don't hear us. And it's changing, I think. I know this is going to sound crazy, but having someone like Trump in office has raised the awareness of how awful our government leadership has become, and it has inspired a lot of women to enter politics and women of women of color. Yeah, women of color to enter politics. And, you know, absolutely awesome. And we need to continue that. And the more women and more minorities that enter politics, it'll start looking like us. Our leadership might actually start looking like us. So that would really that will be a nice, wonderful change. It's got to happen quicker than later, that's for sure.

mWebber: [00:40:50] It desperately needs to.

jBates: [00:40:52] Desperately does. Agreed. Agreed. And we'll just start with shoes. That's a good place to start.

mWebber: [00:41:01] It's the least that I can start, right?

jBates: [00:41:03] You're right. Exactly. It's awesome.

mWebber: [00:41:05] Get me out of school. Well, who knows where it'll go?

jBates: [00:41:07] I know, man, it's very cool. Thank you.

mWebber: [00:41:10] Thank you very much. And like I said, I'll reach out if anything comes up.

jBates: [00:41:14] And all right, I appreciate that. Take care. Thank you, Michael. Take care. Bye. Bye bye.

Interview Amber & Kris Auer

Subject: Cycling Shoes & Equity
Conducted: Tuesday, October 19th, 2021, 3:00pm
Participant: Amber & Kris Auer
Ages: 50 / 50
Region: Baltimore, MD
Cycling history: lifelong cyclists, both industry, both history of racing in Europe and domestically
Profession: bicycle industry professionals (distribution and retail events planning respectively)
Online Presence: <https://www.roamfrance.com>
Shoe size: 39 / 40.5
Zoom recording: video 1560466614.mp4
Duration: 46:08



mWebber: [00:00:00] And note taking only so I'm in a footwear design class just to give you the background here and coming from cycling, as you both know, I wanted to design a cycling shoe. And I. My initial idea was to come up with a sort of a shoe that that takes into account a lot of fashion aspects. And since my initial questions in that survey? Thank you again for submitting that. But that that didn't prove significant enough to me, and I wanted to actually adapt it to be a shoe that actually brings awareness to equity issues in cycling women's equity issues. From a lot of the research I've been doing, I don't see a lot of need for women specific shoe. I welcome your feedback and input on that as well. But I think a shoe that actually what I've been kind of talking a lot to people is like the red iPhone sort of has significance because it's red, because the money goes to HIV/AIDS research in Africa. And that's the other part of the reason why I don't want to have a shoe that's made for women and only for women. I want everybody to kind of embrace this movement and hopefully start a movement or at least have this conversation and discussion. So that's where I'm going. That's where I'm hoping to take this project. And I've been wanting to talk to people to kind of get their feedback, get their input on what they want in a cycling shoe, what they issues they've had with it, why they cycle and everything. And it's great both of you here, because you both have great history and feedback I hope for. What inspires you to ride, to start off with?

aAuer: [00:01:54] Well. I know what inspires Kris to ride.

kAuer: [00:01:59] Well, would that be?

aAuer: [00:02:01] You're like obsessive compulsive brain. Yeah. Yeah.

kAuer: [00:02:10] Why don't you start?

aAuer: [00:02:10] Then why do I ride? I was for me, it's just it's not too different from that. I'm more of a [00:02:18] **it just has a calming me down, lets me focus** [00:02:21] you know, it's kind of not too far off of what the whole Haute Ride that Specialize does. I think I found that as a young person and it, you know, luckily I found it on my own. Yeah, [00:02:32] **it helps me to kind of collect myself** [00:02:35] So. Yeah, just also just [00:02:38] **the way to see the**

world [00:02:41] I think it's the perfect place running is too slow and driving is too fast, and cycling really allows you to see it at a pace where you can still make progress, but it's slow enough to enjoy what you're seeing.

mWebber: [00:02:55] What what initially got you into cycling? Amber.

aAuer: [00:03:01] That would it's basically what I just I would have to say, the best answer to that would be I dodged all of the avenues that would take me out of cycling because if you talked to my parents, I have been in this bike since I was a little little kid and I've never stopped. I mean, I'm not kidding. My parents will tell stories of me learning how [00:03:23] **to ride on a gravel road with my brother's bike that was too big for me and just scrapes and everything all over** [00:03:29] but still getting up, you know? And that was it. I used to beg to ride my bike to school. Just they have no idea, but I was like, really? All about the bike. So but I made it through like my teenage years, the college years, all of that. [00:03:43] **The bike was always central to my life** [00:03:45]

mWebber: [00:03:46] So, yeah, yeah, my my just kind of relate to that. My, my mother and sister both dispute which one of them taught me how to ride a bike. I was they taught me when I was pretty young, and I don't. I think it was my sister, but I don't really remember. But yeah, I get that for a brief period. I owned a car and got around by car, and that was like the period where I stopped riding a lot. I'm in college now again, and I'm not writing enough now either, but that'll come back. I know you both have raised a lot, right?

aAuer: [00:04:25] Kris, more so than me. But yeah, yeah.

mWebber: [00:04:28] What got you into cycling? Yeah.

kAuer: [00:04:31] Whoo! Strange attraction to bites from the little kid started buying bikes that taught myself how to ride. But but I started getting into like the more technical aspects of it road cycling in particular without even knowing it existed. Like I was riding for years before someone was like, Oh, you know, they race these

things. I was like, Oh, like, you've got a race bike. I'm like, Oh, cool, you know, like added bonus. But like, I just can't explain. But the bike was always fascinating. It probably goes back to as a kid, it's what I did. I was out [00:05:13] **all day freedom** and [00:05:15] that exactly it was just it was freeing for so many reasons. And then as I got older and the weight of the world falls a little heavier, know [00:05:27] **it gives you that stress relief** [00:05:29] Definitely for me, if I don't ride or do some exercise, but riding is obviously preferred, like then I don't sleep. So it's yeah, it's it's [00:05:43] **it's meditative. It's therapeutic. And then there's the exercise and health benefits on adrenaline Zen** [00:05:53]

mWebber: [00:05:54] So I think I think Amber said OCD is for both of you, sort of, but I think it's probably best both in your DNA.

aAuer: [00:06:03] Yeah, I mean, there's obviously parts of it that go there as well, but it does do what it does to our brains that help us be better in our daily lives. Yeah, I mean, I know running could do it. I mean, I've been a runner in the past as well when I took small breaks off the bike, but always the biking has always been the happy place.

mWebber: [00:06:26] Real quick, Amber, how old are you? 50 and Chris, 50,

kAuer: [00:06:36] Creeping up on fifty one.

mWebber: [00:06:37] Yeah, yeah, I'm not far behind, as you know,

kAuer: [00:06:41] Could be worse, could be Johnny.

mWebber: [00:06:44] Whats he at now?

kAuer: [00:06:45] I like fifty four, fifty five. For now they'll be. He'll be fifty five plus Racing Age next year if he's not already.

mWebber: [00:06:53] Yeah. You guys are both in Baltimore now. Are you planning on staying there?

kAuer: [00:06:59] No.

aAuer: [00:07:02] No, no, I mean, for two years, couple, a couple few years, we're

kAuer: [00:07:08] Saving some cash, we're going back to Europe. It may not be a full time gig in Europe, but like like an eight month, four month or six and six or something. But I. Much prefer it's not a it's not an ego thing, it's not a red thing, it's just the life and there's issues over there, for sure. Like, like, I can't begin to pretend there weren't, but the pace is is more.

mWebber: [00:07:40] No, I've been. Yeah. What's and last formality question? What size shoes do you both wear?

kAuer: [00:07:50] Forty point five. Thirty nine.

aAuer: [00:07:54] Thirty nine.

mWebber: [00:07:56] Usually crossover use each other's shoes.

aAuer: [00:07:59] No, that's a bummer. It's like the only thing we can't share, really. Yeah, like we kind of share bikes. We have to.

kAuer: [00:08:07] We can share most bikes, whatever. Every once in a while, I put her kit on and I'm like, Why is this one feel weird? Did I gain weight? I mean, what's

aAuer: [00:08:16] Jersey is always like, yeah, little small for you.

mWebber: [00:08:23] Well, let's get into the shoes. What what do you guys like, you guys like Specialized for sure. Have you tried anything else?

aAuer: [00:08:35] Yeah, we used to ride SIDI, Lake,

kAuer: [00:08:38] SIDI Bontrager Those in the most recent would be SIDI Bontrager Specialized for sure. I've ridden Lake as well, but long time ago know Diadora

mWebber: [00:08:57] I used to have Diadoras

kAuer: [00:08:59] fizik or Giro when they were doing.

mWebber: [00:09:05] All right, so out of this whole arsenal for the both of you, what what was the standout best shoe in terms of comfort and what look best as well?

kAuer: [00:09:18] Aesthetically Specialized looks best, yeah, like a Bontrager these days is a close second, and in the time when I was wearing them, they were good looking. Shoes Specialized across the board always looks good in terms of overall like best in class comfort. It seems like they're on a three year cycle, and after every three years or Specialized, they take a concept that worked and then destroy it and come out with a good looking but incredibly uncomfortable shoe. And that you just love to look at and hate.

aAuer: [00:09:56] As of late, there was that one year they changed the last

kAuer: [00:09:59] And six or the sixes were on the sevens and the sixes and the fives were both

aAuer: [00:10:08] Not awesome. The fives are the one that I had a problem with

kAuer: [00:10:11] Fives everyone had a problem with,

aAuer: [00:10:13] But the city didn't. Some people have loving them and I just hated them

mWebber: [00:10:16] And they and this. This was evident when they changed the last. They said,

kAuer: [00:10:20] Yeah. So the first year we did Kanza, when you and I did cans in '13 those that year, those shoes were great, whatever you, whatever that was. And then. The in '14 they were they changed the shoe, and the last was just awful, so, so, so bad that they had, like Hennessey, gave me three pairs of shoes to try three different lasts and they're all awful. And then for the next year, he made me a pair of Audax. Oh yeah, Off-Road shoes, which I still have because they were just like, probably the perfect gravel shoe that they've never made since forgot about Hennessey. Yeah. Yeah, he's up in New Hampshire, still in the shoe industry, but he does insoles.

mWebber: [00:11:10] It's nice. Aesthetically, what was so nice? What's so nice about the Specialized?

aAuer: [00:11:18] [00:11:18] **Very clean, clean looking** [00:11:19] they always just a really, you know, just there's nothing put on them for any reason other than it should be there, like they don't try to add bells and whistles that you think might be cool. It's just simple.

kAuer: [00:11:34] Yeah, they do a lot of simple shoes without a lot of logos, without a lot of graphics. But even when they do logo and graphic, there is again, [00:11:41] **they don't they don't go over the top dressing it up it** [00:11:46] You've seen them. They do some crazy looking shoes, but they're super limited editions, which only to me, I've got maybe one set of those, but like that to me, like from a marketing standpoint. Yeah, just released 200 pairs of cool ass shoes because, you know, like when they're gone, they're gone. I think it's like, that's exactly the I mean, Nike does it nonstop. So Specialized does it a little bit. No one else.

mWebber: [00:12:11] It's it's not too dissimilar from the Halloween kit as well. Yeah, it's limited edition. You're going to sell out of them and it's special. Well, just going to the survey as well, Amber, you mentioned these Fly London, what do you like about those?

aAuer: [00:12:31] They're just [00:12:32] **incredibly unique.** [00:12:34] They're not I wouldn't call them, they're not like the what do you call it, the Louboutins or anything like that, they're not this overly girly feeling, right? Like a lot of those, a lot of those high fashion brands are just too feminine, I guess, for my taste. And so they do a [00:12:57] **good job of still making it feel feminine,** [00:13:00] but with a little bit of a it's not tomboy because it's like some of their stuff. Maybe it makes me feel that way when I look at it, but it just is more my style. It's [00:13:11] **a little bit chunkier heel** [00:13:13] and really unique ways of using fabric or not fabric, the leathers and the materials that they use. It's the way that they. Some of the shoots I've only got what two pairs left, maybe that I've, but any of them I've had, I've had for 10 years plus. Yeah, I just love them so much. So yeah, I guess. I guess that's that's why. Interesting colors. Yeah.

mWebber: [00:13:42] Just trying to get a feel for what appeals to people. You know, part of part of the product design aspect of this is listening, you know, to see what people want, what people experience, why they ride, why they choose the shoes they choose. I don't know if, Kris, if you filled out the survey at all, but what do you like outside of cycling shoes?

kAuer: [00:14:04] Sorry, what was the question?

mWebber: [00:14:06] What do you like outside of cycling shoes, aesthetically

aAuer: [00:14:10] Other shoe brands

kAuer: [00:14:13] Like Adidas? There are there generally. I think actually, I think Adidas in general, like running and hiking shoes. They tend to they offer the features that I'm looking for, like with a hiking shoe. I like having something waterproof do for. I also like that they're willing to take a chance on on color.

mWebber: [00:14:36] Yeah.

kAuer: [00:14:37] Like go to go to the Solomon USA website. It's like, Hey, we've got four different colors in the shoe that you like. There's black, slightly less black, black with some brown and then black again. And but [00:14:50] **if you go to the European website, it's just like. Oh, there's like eight unique colors** [00:14:54] that are all, you know, like. So again, they don't always have them. But but

the [00:15:00] **U.S. market is incredibly drab.** [00:15:03] Yeah, Adidas seems to take some chances on what they'll bring in, and I'm a lot more. I'm a lot less conservative in my day to day footwear than I am in my cycling footwear. So cycling for me, it's got a yeah, it's got a look. Basically, it's a white shirt. Kris likes white, yeah, white shoe, silver shoe or like, [00:15:25] **it's got to be smooth look** [00:15:26] and it's got to be cool looking. You can't be can't be garish. It's something you wear every single day and it's got to go with every single kit, though. But shit everything goes with jeans.

aAuer: [00:15:37] I'm a little more adventurous. I've had red, I've had blue.

mWebber: [00:15:42] I got a pretty Shimano S-Phyres in blue and their rad shoes. Those are really nicely fitted shoes as well. Probably the most comfortable shoe I've got right now. Um, but I don't really write any bikes that have that anymore, I don't have a gravel bike anymore and my cross bike is a flat bar commuter, so. Right? Cross out here. Never really got into it.

aAuer: [00:16:09] Oh, it's awful. It's terrible.

mWebber: [00:16:11] Yeah. Yeah. So glad some people defend it. I'm like, Why? I don't understand it?

kAuer: [00:16:16] Because they've never raced anywhere else but California and California, so they can't be wrong.

mWebber: [00:16:22] Well, exactly what you both worked at. Specialized, did you guys Amber? You may have mentioned that that Kris did something with shoes there, did you?

aAuer: [00:16:31] We didn't work there, but he because of Hennessey and because of who's the other guy that you worked with?

kAuer: [00:16:36] I worked with O'Brien. I worked in Hennessey, I worked with.

aAuer: [00:16:40] They just, you know, they would send Kris shoes. Oh, it was one of those people that that they requested feedback from pretty regularly because of his opinionated spirit when it comes to things like that.

mWebber: [00:16:56] I understand. I understand. Well, it's

kAuer: [00:16:59] Bad. It's bad. If it's good, it's good. But if you can say why it's bad, that's really good. Or the flip side, the problem is a lot of product people get, they put their heart into it and they can't take criticism. Yeah, [00:17:14] **but a lot of stuff gets greenlighted by testers who just want free shit** [00:17:18] And as a result, I got as new people moved in and I got less free shit. So because they didn't want

aAuer: [00:17:26] The ugly, yeah, they didn't want the people who are willing to say, No, it's not working.

mWebber: [00:17:30] Yeah, where now you're able to kind of. Can you tell when they change the last on on a shoe? What aspects of that can you tell where? How?

kAuer: [00:17:46] For me, [00:17:46] **it was always the whole foot.** I mean, like where where the arch fell, even though the footbed never changed it like the last and I might be wrong in saying this, but it's my impression would change how that molded into my foot over use Heel Cup would fit differently. You know, whether my toes

went, I can ride almost anything, but it's just like when when my feet were hurt and my four minutes in [00:18:14] you know, it's like for me. When Specialized made their changes, it went pretty like it was pretty much instant. Tried them on, and it's like 10 miles into a ride. It's like, These aren't any good, huh?

mWebber: [00:18:27] You know, I saw you guys got a dog. What's his name?

kAuer: [00:18:33] Sonar.

mWebber: [00:18:34] Sonar. How old is it?

kAuer: [00:18:37] He's 12 years old, really?

mWebber: [00:18:40] Yeah, it looks like a puppy.

aAuer: [00:18:45]

kAuer: [00:18:51]

mWebber: [00:19:06] So you're not eating cats anymore, do you?

kAuer: [00:19:10] No, no. The cats were gone before before I even went to Cali.

mWebber: [00:19:14]

kAuer: [00:19:18]

mWebber: [00:20:01]

kAuer: [00:20:04]

mWebber: [00:20:14]

kAuer: [00:20:15]

mWebber: [00:20:28] So. Crazy. Back to shoes, yeah. I mean, this is sort of a redundant question, because I know, you know, some of y'all's history in terms of gender equity in cycling. Um. You guys agree that it exists, that there are disparity issues.

kAuer: [00:20:56] Yeah.

mWebber: [00:20:57] Yep. And I know with with racing and Charm City and all those efforts that you put out, you're you're addressing it that way. What other ways do you guys have ideas to address and diminish these inequities?

kAuer: [00:21:16] I mean, I would say maybe what you're already maybe planning on doing, and it's something that's Specialized is actually doing, but I think it's a good, good way about it is and it doesn't work across the board and that's the unfortunate side, but is to [00:21:31] not dumb shit down for non males like. [00:21:37] oh, women don't buy four hundred dollar shoes. Well, there's less women buying the shoes, for sure, but it doesn't mean they don't buy them. You know, like you're not going to do 10000 pairs of white S-Work shoes for women. You know, you're doing four men and your cell, everyone. You do ten thousand, you're going to end up with a lot left over. [00:21:56] That said, you shouldn't do zero. [00:21:58] you know, but don't dumb it down like Shimano for years didn't do a high end women's shoe. I don't even know if they do now. But for years, four years, they had women's and they still, I believe, do have women's specific shoes.

But. But they didn't have anything hot like and that's when shoes were like two hundred and 280, \$80 for a high end shoe, and they just didn't bother. [00:22:24] So not dumbing products down, I think is a good way to start. Makes people feel like the values there, if they're the enthusiast or on the on the upper levels. But that trickles down. People sense what's at the top. And [00:22:40] even if they're not buying, they're so yeah, not not dumbing shit down for for non males.

mWebber: [00:22:50] Well, go on, Amber. Sorry.

aAuer: [00:22:53] Well, I mean, if you're just are you talking about like product wise or like what I'm doing currently in my job now is working with our [00:23:04] diversity director to figure out how to bring more women into our company. [00:23:10] And we're reevaluating the things that the company can do to bring in more career focused women, not just bike women, but women who are, you know, maybe do have an athletic bent because usually people who are attracted to Q, but maybe not even that. So we're that's once for me. [00:23:28] I believe when we get more women overall into the industry in any place, that trickle down is going to happen much more easily because more women will be at the table. [00:23:38]

kAuer: [00:23:38] But that's what

aAuer: [00:23:42] That's what accounts for about accounting is for because they're all all the women. I don't say all the women that there are a lot of women in HR and accounting at bike companies. Yeah, like in my sale, I'm on the sales team. It is [00:23:58] 90 percent white and 95 percent men. [00:24:02]

mWebber: [00:24:04] That's awesome. That means that's not the way to do it, though. It's so, you know, I don't even remember what are y'all doing right now anyway, like job-wise.

aAuer: [00:24:15] I am working with BP. That's right, my main role is I'm working with MET helmets out of Italy. Exclusive distributor for them. So we just launched in July and they'll start hitting retail in December.

mWebber: [00:24:32] Those are good helmets?

aAuer: [00:24:34] Yeah, they're really great helmets. Yeah, yeah.

mWebber: [00:24:36] How about you, Kris? What are you doing?

kAuer: [00:24:38] So I am working for a bike shop, but not. Yeah, we've got, you know, it's Conti's bike shops.

mWebber: [00:24:48] Oh yeah.

kAuer: [00:24:50] So they're on a really big expansion program right now. And so I run all the events on the East Coast for them. So like everything, not really tiny one, it's not like, Hey, we have a Saturday group ride, but anything with like the MS events. Or there's this tour of Virginia to this that the other thing we just pulled in two more hires from like higher higher echelons at Specialized George Lee's at Conti's as well. If you remember him, right? So so yeah, I work either at an event or from home, so I don't work in a bike shop, but I work for, you know, 15 bike shops, so to speak.

mWebber: [00:25:38] Well, if you wanted to, you could just walk down and work with Johnny at Joe's right?

kAuer: [00:25:42] I am pretty sure I could go work anywhere and any bike shop without too much difficulty. These days, I don't desire to do so.

mWebber: [00:25:53] Conti's brought out my last shop in D.C. I worked at the Bike Rack. Yep, yep. Yeah. Well, that's good, though, with the diversity hires and such at that QBP. Um, those are the things that that need to happen. I was having a discussion with a guy years ago I worked with at AC and we were talking about politics and we were talking about, you know, he was he wasn't disputing the idea of having women in government, but he was like, Well, I mean, we're doing just fine, as is. I'm like, Are we? I don't really think we are. And I was like, Maybe things wouldn't be so bad if we listen to the rest of the population. You know, men have been at the helm for far too long. So that's really where I want this to go. And the whole inception of this idea came from the latest Paris-Roubaix. It was awesome we had a women's edition of it, but is diminished field diminished course diminished payout doesn't have to be this way. So those are the things that I'm hoping that something like this could, could address and have people talk about more. And granted, this is just a school project, but, you know, I'm hopeful. Yeah. Do you think actually having a shoe that represents something like like the iPhone does? I know this is a lot of people say, Oh, it's just the red phone, but

kAuer: [00:27:23] I would think so. I mean, looking at what happened with, I mean, it didn't go anywhere which cycling. So it doesn't really surprise me, but something like a shoe could go a little bit deeper, like the guys wearing the trans support wristbands at Unbound or whatever. And it's like some goofy stuff like that. But it [00:27:45] shows a willingness for people to wear something that has a different value. [00:27:51]

aAuer: [00:27:52] So, yeah, and I I when I was leading the Rapha women's ride out here, a couple of the women I was riding with brought up L39ION and they're like, Oh, have you seen the new shoe? They're coming out with L39ION, you know, and Legion is really about diversity, right? I don't know how well you know what they've been up to and what they're doing. I'm not actually, oh, I.

kAuer: [00:28:16] I'll check it out. It's pretty easy

aAuer: [00:28:18] In L.A. it's I don't know if you even I can send you a link to their video because I've got it. I've got it handy, so I'll send that to you after this. Just please show you what what they're about, but it's Justin Williams.

mWebber: [00:28:33] Oh yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

aAuer: [00:28:35] And so anyways, so these women were super stoked on this shoe that was going to be coming out and they learned about it because if they follow the L39ION team, you know, so I think that like that's not necessarily a cause per say, but [00:28:51] they do have that panache around diversity and like not women, [00:28:57] necessarily. I mean, they did. They did just add a couple of women to their team. However, their theirs is just like diversity in general. So I do think there's room for it, for sure.

mWebber: [00:29:10] It's funny since I've I've left the bike shop and gone back to school and basically not thrown away my history or my life. But I mean, I've changed tack so severely that I'm not up to speed on all the latest stuff and there's so much stuff, so it's hard to keep track of it all. And this is this is a project I've been working on trying to get back into it because product design, I think I think I'm going to be good at it and I do want to stay within bike. So it's been a nice departure from the bike shop life and that's really what I

wanted to get out of that day to day bike shop. But yeah, hopefully this is the right path. Um, this is this is great, I mean, I I know you guys are both advocates for women equity and riding and everything, so it's good to have this validated further. Um. What else do I have to ask?

kAuer: [00:30:18] It's a cool idea. If you get to the end and end game, you know, pitch it.

mWebber: [00:30:25] Yeah, that's the plan, I guess, I guess to. One other question I had I didn't ask because anyone interrupt. Um, the difference between men's and women's shoes, is there a significant difference? In cycling shoes,

aAuer: [00:30:44] I mean, [00:30:45] in my experience, the biggest place where there can be a difference is in that heel box [00:30:54] But I mean, I would say. You know, overall, there's not a huge, huge difference, but I have noticed. If I, you know, try it on men's shoes that my the back of [00:31:09] my foot definitely doesn't get, doesn't get that hug that it should have. [00:31:15]

mWebber: [00:31:15] Yeah, that's that's been a common statement. A lot of people commented to the survey on that Heel Cup being loose or whatever. I wore a pair of women's. I think she was ever.

aAuer: [00:31:31] Yeah, let's say that my

kAuer: [00:31:34] You're not those crappy mountain shoes that are

aAuer: [00:31:36] Still women, the white ones are the blue ones. The blue ones were women's blue. They're my favorites.

kAuer: [00:31:41] Yeah.

aAuer: [00:31:42] I won't get rid of them because if I'm going to do a long ass gravel ride or something, I know I can wear them.

kAuer: [00:31:49] It's also less of a race shoe.

aAuer: [00:31:51] It is less of a race shoe, but they're darn comfortable and they're really old.

kAuer: [00:31:56] [00:31:56] I wear Specialized women's road shoes. Shortly after the shop open because I thought the color was cooler. So and they they fit me just fine. But [00:32:08] like, you know, they'll say there's an Italian fit as well, you know, and shoes that somehow Italians have narrower feet. Maybe not, I don't know,

aAuer: [00:32:24] But my road to my slippers, those are

kAuer: [00:32:26] Not, yeah, those are

aAuer: [00:32:28] Incredibly

kAuer: [00:32:28] Comfortable. We've got those specialized EXO's. I don't know if you've seen this. No, it's like it's a Dynema top. It's one BOA. It's like one hundred and twenty grams a shoe. I mean, there's nothing to them. Yeah, wow. They're slippers. They really are

aAuer: [00:32:45] Slippers. So [00:32:47] wear them on really not days of my feet start to kind of swell. They just kind of really comfortable [00:32:52]

kAuer: [00:32:52] I love them. And that's a non gender specific shoe. So I'm not saying Specialized doesn't like throw maybe a narrow heel cup that might have been from their women's research back in the day on size is under 40 or something because they might. They're not saying, and if they are, they aren't. But the flip side is they're not selling it as a women's shoe. They a lot of what they're doing now is. Is just one, if you wanted to buy S-works right now and you went on the IBD site, you wouldn't click on women's shoes, you just click on shoes, right and work your way through from there.

mWebber: [00:33:33] Do you all think there should be a women's specific shoe, in other words?

aAuer: [00:33:39] I don't personally, yeah, I don't think it has to be

kAuer: [00:33:44] Women's colourways, I think are still fair. But you will find if you don't go to hard core on it, like you'll find like remember the pink, maybe were still there, the pink Sirus. Yeah, we did it. It was a men's bike. Everyone we got we sold. You know, like so if you have pink shoes, you know that they might not go the full size run or whatever. There's crossover like

aAuer: [00:34:16] Maybe just make fewer of them at the larger size

kAuer: [00:34:18] Runs. I crossed over and you know, when there was women shoes and I because the color was cooler,

mWebber: [00:34:24] You're no less of a man, though, are you, Kris?

kAuer: [00:34:28] No, I don't think so. I don't think I'm all man. I mean,

mWebber: [00:34:33] I know, I don't know if you remember, the Sirus was like my favorite bike we sold there. I love taking that bike ride. It was just a fun bike. Comfortable. All right. Who do you all look up to in the area of gender equity in the cycling world?

aAuer: [00:34:52] Off the top of my head. I don't think it's being done overly well, like I can tell you who I think is doing it really well in another industry. Burton Burton Yeah.

mWebber: [00:35:10] What are they doing? Well, I guess who who is, they're doing it.

aAuer: [00:35:15] Who is there doing it? Well, the owner's wife, essentially from the get go, has just been a pretty big voice in it, but at some point, probably, I don't know. 12. 12 or 15 years ago, they just took a really hard look at their company and we're like, Holy shit. We're like, You know, all men, right? Yeah. And so she made it her mission to change it. And that's kind of where I'm at with QBP. I mean, the woman did all she did. They did. They put all kinds of amazing things in place in order to attract the kind of women they wanted to work for them, including things like if you are at a certain level of employment and you have to travel and you have a baby, they will send a nanny. They will pay for somebody else to come with you to take care of your child so that you can, you know, like there's [00:36:05] like they're doing things. That don't take women out of the equation or because women will remove themselves from even from positions like that because they know they can't do it right [00:36:16] And so they've. But it's not only that we kind of did it on the product side of things as well, but they're just a company that I've looked to over the years, like when I had a Specialized I had a

couple of other people come in and speak at our because I was in charge of the whole Camber thing like which is women's organizational group in the outdoor. And I was the point person at Specialized. So I would host happy hours and stuff to get to know. But I'm trying to think of who is doing it in

kAuer: [00:36:49] The bike industry. A company to look at, they don't do shoes, but a company to look at would probably be the Velocio apparel.

mWebber: [00:36:57] Yeah, yeah, it doesn't be shoes by any means.

kAuer: [00:37:00] So Velocio is pretty on the ball. That said, there's always a caveat within the bike industry, which is there's still more bros than there should be bikes.

mWebber: [00:37:14] Bicycles have a lot of way to go, right?

kAuer: [00:37:16] Yeah, but Velocio is addressing issues. They're they're putting their money where their mouth is both in something like with like BIPOC, with women, with the environment. So they're they're at least walking some of the talk. So that's probably a worthwhile one to look at. Yeah, otherwise it's kind of the standard, you know? You know, just look at the look toward smaller companies for sure. The bigger companies that could make change. Still, you know, like I'm sure Specialized still hires a lot of people get hired because they're either a fast or be good looking and in the perfect world both.

aAuer: [00:38:07] So I mean, there are some smaller companies like nobody that's able to really affect change. I mean, if enough of those small ones get rolling, you know, slowly things could change as women owned by companies from product to stores, whatever. But. You know, I I would love to see a larger company take that. I mean, Q really is trying, but it's going to be right. They do have a lot of things and kind of. I've seen on an agenda, but their vision, but it takes years to execute

kAuer: [00:38:43] And it's visible.

aAuer: [00:38:45] Yeah, they're not. Yeah, they're not Specialized like QBP is a background company, right? People have people in the industry don't even know who they are. Right? Work in a bike shop. If you're just a person who loves bikes, you don't know who they are.

mWebber: [00:38:57] So, yeah, it always blew me away. When customers, the shop would come in and say, What can't you get that from Q or something? Or I saw this on their website. Like, how do you know about Q?

aAuer: [00:39:06] Yeah, yeah, that's a secret.

mWebber: [00:39:10] Yeah. Well, great. I may reach out to you all for more follow up questions, but

aAuer: [00:39:18] If I who I think is doing it well on the bike, I feel like there is somebody and I just can't place it right now. So if I think that is, I'll send that off to you. Yeah, please.

mWebber: [00:39:26] A lot of times a lot of these questions are really just to gauge what y'all's awareness is of it. So y'all are on it.

kAuer: [00:39:36] That's where I've heard of. What's that? I feel like we're still playing catch up because I'm not. I haven't great. You

know, we don't. We do some rides. But the racing aspect of it is like, I haven't really been jazzed on that quite a few years now.

aAuer: [00:39:51] So we're still reinserting ourselves into that here in the States as well.

mWebber: [00:39:57] So, yeah, it's been quite a roller coaster ride past few years. Me self inflicted a lot of ways, but, you know, I wasn't expecting the pandemic that throw itself in there.

aAuer: [00:40:11] Yeah, but it did a number on a bunch

kAuer: [00:40:14] Of us, that's for sure. What are you about to say? You heard what

mWebber: [00:40:18] I heard in Charm City. From what I saw in Charm City looked awesome. Is a good year.

kAuer: [00:40:23] Yeah, it was the biggest year ever. Numbers wise, television. I haven't even watched it yet, but it was on GCN.

mWebber: [00:40:33] No shit.

kAuer: [00:40:34] So you can watch it if you can find. Don't watch the first day, though you can watch. The second day is better because they figured out the filming quite a bit better. But yeah, if you can, it's probably on hacked on YouTube somewhere as well. But it's.

aAuer: [00:40:52] Hello. Hi, guys.

kAuer: [00:40:55] How are you?

aAuer: [00:40:56] So Bob and say Hi.

kAuer: [00:40:59] Good luck. But yeah, it's on GCN, so

mWebber: [00:41:04] I'll check it out for sure. Yeah, L39ION, I'll check that out for sure, too.

aAuer: [00:41:11] Yeah, I'll go. I thought I had on my phone, but I'm going to grab it and send it from the other computer for you.

kAuer: [00:41:16] They're either going to be a force to be reckoned with, like within the year, like in the industry, like outside of just being a bike team or they're going to die a super, super fast death. I don't think it'll be the former, not the latter.

aAuer: [00:41:32] But yeah, they just announced a 14 team expansion.

kAuer: [00:41:37] Like throughout, like Miami, with what I assume will be a largely Hispanic team, New York. So but then tried before, so maybe this time it sticks.

mWebber: [00:41:50] Well, like bikes have the power to do a lot of that. So just like we're all saying it's in our DNA.

kAuer: [00:41:58] You got any new bike, man.

mWebber: [00:42:04] I can't deny that they are. I mean, the Turbo was awesome when we got that one. I remember I was like, This is fantastic for commuting, but man, the people out here. Drive me nuts, they like buzz me and like, can you call it out, dude?

kAuer: [00:42:17] Yeah, they were doing that when we were there, but we have two turbo Vados right now and we like the other night we had to go see Louren, like downtown. We did that. Then we went to Charm City, like post race, post race kind of meeting. So we went to another part of downtown, then rode home on the bike path up to Mt. Washington. And it's just like, awesome to not get in the car. Because. Parking in one of those situations would have been a giant pain in the ass and probably both, but definitely one.

mWebber: [00:42:52] And I mean, I think it's a great advancement. It's awesome for people who don't have the athletic ability who want to not drive. All those are great things and I have no real but with this, but it's the mountain bikers and the road bikes, and it's like I. But for the same reasons.

kAuer: [00:43:15] Yeah, I'm with you. Like, I use the ebike is a tool. It's how I see bike for me at this point when I'm 75, maybe e road bike is what allows me to doing those amazing riding. But yeah, for me, the e-bike is a tool. At this age, I don't know, but I'm not hating on the other bikes I get like, I want to hate on them, but I'm trying really hard not to hate them. But the Vados kick ass. I mean, we did some grocery shopping in France on them and

aAuer: [00:43:57] I did shopping here,

kAuer: [00:43:58] Do shopping here. We only have one car. So it's, you know, that's the plan.

mWebber: [00:44:05] So it's it's the way to do it with that, you know, like the last mile commuting as well. Like whenever I come back east, if I go, I'll go down to D.C. Invariably I'll take the train down and take those scooters where those Lyft bikes around town. It's so much easier.

kAuer: [00:44:25] Why would you want to? I have to drive to D.C. once in a while now, and I f and hate every second of it. Like, yeah, it's fortunately not often, but only twice so far. But I'm probably going to need to go this week or the beginning of next week and

mWebber: [00:44:43] Take the MARC train down.

kAuer: [00:44:45] Well, it's yes is the quick answer is that is the plan the the second part to that is always like, I've got to pick up stuff and drop stuff off. It's not. It's too much, it's too heavy into or too large.

mWebber: [00:45:00] Otherwise, I get it.

kAuer: [00:45:02] Yeah. Always the pain, but.

mWebber: [00:45:06] Well, thank you again. It's great seeing you all.

aAuer: [00:45:09] You too excited to see what you. Yeah, you know. Congrats on your last helmet. Yeah. Helmet design and be fun to see what you end up

Innovation Plan – Universally Specific (W.I.P.)

WIP:

- ➔ side zip with boa adjustment from heel across metatarsal tops
- ➔ Raynaud's syndrome wind wall (thermal/moisture control)
- ➔ mid-Boa adjustments clutch points (mid foot boa clutch)
- ➔ adjustable heel cup (like SIDI sometimes offers)
- ➔ volume control, arch support inserts (footbed variations?)
- ➔ does innovation like a convertible sole make sense?
- ➔ seasonal campaign shoe covers
- ➔ return to a welted design for easier repair/replacement parts



Inspiration for the side-zip closure; but is it a style that's transferrable to a cycling shoe?

The shifts in BOA location and a side zipper closure may create a distinct shoe making it more recognizable for its message...

Existing solutions for arch support, volume control, heel cup retention, and blood flow assistance:



A popular aftermarket footbed that allegedly provide the most arch support in their spectrum (Specialized \$35.00 - \$55.00)



Another aftermarket footbed with visible and substantial arch support (Solestar \$99.00 - \$135.00)



An example of SIDI's Adjustable Heel Retention Device



Metatarsal Pads (G8 Performance \$42.00)

Construction & Materials Plan – Prototype (W.I.P.)

WIP:

- ➔ explore materials:
- ➔ goretex,
- ➔ carbon fiber,
- ➔ zipper,
- ➔ boa placement,
- ➔ "green" materials

In Summary

A women's cycling shoe does not need to be anatomically or physiologically different, instead the plan is to design a shoe that truly creates equal comfort for all wearers, that will be distinct, unique, and readily identifiable to become a visual demonstration of that wearer's interest in building positive equity in the sport at large.

In order to empower women to ride well, be represented, and buy quality products—and in turn, get more cyclists on the road/trail/etc—the market will need to do more in order to include and level the playing field regarding what's available and what is supporting all riders. Bringing awareness to problematic discrepancies and disparities is the goal of this shoe primarily, with the additional benefits of introducing innovative fit solutions and stylistic features that will be noticeable and connected to a message of equity for female riders. Like mentioned in the documentary *Half the Road*, “if women hold up half the sky, where is [their] half the road?” — the **Equity Cycling Shoe** will be a product that demonstrates a cyclist is willing to wear something that has an additional value, even just as a talking point; similar to the unique iPhones—and many other products—marketed as **(PRODUCT)^{RED}** that inspire awareness of people living with HIV, and another example is the popular yellow **LIVESTRONG** cycling bracelet promoting cancer awareness as another example.

It might be no surprise, but these disparities and inequities in gender pay, opportunity, and support exist outside of the cycling industry as well. *This Changes Everything* is a film produced by the actor Geena Davis highlighting similar themes of inequity in Hollywood; evidently this gender disparity is present in all walks of life, the purpose of this **Equity Cycling Shoe** is to continue cognizance on the topic with the intention of eventually affecting change in cycling and beyond.

References, Resources, & Citations

Bertine, Kathryn. "Half the Road: The Passion, Pitfalls & Power of Women's Professional Cycling." Yidio, 2014, www.yidio.com/movie/half-the-road-the-passion-pitfalls-power-of-womens-professional-cycling/44509.

BikeRadar. "Gold Shoes for Olympic Champion." BikeRadar, 28 Mar. 2019, www.bikeradar.com/news/gold-shoes-for-olympic-champion/?image=1&type=gallery&gallery=1&embedded_slideshow=1.

Burt, Phil, et al. *Bike Fit: Optimise Your Bike Position for High Performance and Injury Avoidance*. Illustrated, Bloomsbury Sport, 2014.

Cary, Tom. "Women's Tour 2014: All-Conquering 'Cannibal' Marianne Vos Is Still Hungry for Success." The Telegraph, 5 May 2014, www.telegraph.co.uk/sport/othersports/cycling/10808929/Womens-Tour-2014-All-conquering-Cannibal-Marianne-Vos-is-still-hungry-for-success.html.

Clemitsen, Suze. *Ride the Revolution: The Inside Stories from Women in Cycling*. Bloomsbury USA, 2015.

Council of Europe. "Women's Rights and Gender Equality." Commissioner for Human Rights, www.coe.int/en/web/commissioner/thematic-work/women-s-rights-and-gender-equality.

Davis, Geena. "This Changes Everything." iTunes, 16 Aug. 2019, itunes.apple.com/us/movie/this-changes-everything/id1468006778.

Diaz, Lucy. "Female Pro Cyclists Deserve Equal Pay, Opportunities, and Support. It's About Time They Got It." Bicycling, 17 July 2019, www.bicycling.com/racing/a28414741/gender-inequality-cycling.

Ditchfield, Henry. "Prize Money in Sport - BBC Sport Study." BBC Sport, 8 Mar. 2021, www.bbc.com/sport/56266693.

Dreier, Fred. "VeloNews Stories of the Decade: 'Half the Road' Ignites a Movement." velonews.com, 3 Jan. 2020, www.velonews.com/news/velonews-stories-of-the-decade-half-the-road-ignites-a-movement.

Falkingham, Katie, and Sonia Oxley. "Female Cyclists Feel Undervalued - Banks." BBC Sport, 8 Mar. 2021, www.bbc.com/sport/cycling/56307206.

Frattini, Kirsten. "Annemiek Van Vleuten: Live TV Before Equal Prize Money." cyclingnews.com, 5 Mar. 2021, www.cyclingnews.com/news/annemiek-van-vleuten-live-tv-before-equal-prize-money.

"Statistics on the Purchasing Power of Women." girlpowermarketing, 16 May 2017, girlpowermarketing.com/statistics-purchasing-power-women.

Jacquet, Fabienne. "'Shrink It and Pink It' Is Over!" Innoveve, 19 June 2018, innoveve.com/shrink-it-and-pink-it-is-over.

LIV Staff. "Marianne Vos: Actually I Can Make a Comeback: Liv Cycling Official Site." Marianne Vos | Actually I Can Make a Comeback | Liv Cycling Official Site, <https://www.liv-cycling.com/global/campaigns/actually-i-can-make-a-comeback/20231>.

Long, Danielle. "Women Hold up Half the Sky: How China Is Building a Gender Equal Ad Industry." The Drum, 23 Jan. 2018, www.thedrum.com/news/2018/01/23/women-hold-up-half-the-sky-how-china-building-gender-equal-ad-industry.

"Marianne Vos Official Website - Home." Marianne Vos Official Website, 16 Aug. 2021, mariannevosofficial.com.

"Marianne Vos." Total Women's Cycling, 30 Sept. 2016, totalwomenscycling.com/people/marianne-vos.

McRae, Donald. "Lizzie Armitstead and Marianne Vos United in Fighting Prejudice." The Guardian, 21 Feb. 2018, www.theguardian.com/sport/2012/nov/30/lizzie-armistead-marianne-vos-united.

Nystrom, Michael. "Talking Tactics with Professional Cyclist Marianne Vos." active.com, 27 Sept. 2021, www.active.com/cycling/articles/talking-tactics-with-professional-cyclist-marianne-vos.

O'Malley, Soren. "The Importance of the Bicycle to the Early Womens Liberation Movement." Crankedmag, 13 Mar. 2007, crankedmagazine.wordpress.com/issues/issue-4/the-importance-of-the-bicycle-to-the-early-womens-liberation-movement.

"Paris-Roubaix 2021 One Day Race Results." <https://www.procyclingstats.com>, www.procyclingstats.com/race/paris-roubaix/2021/result. Accessed 7 Oct. 2021.

"Paris-Roubaix Femmes 2021 One Day Race Results." <https://www.procyclingstats.com>, www.procyclingstats.com/race/paris-roubaix-we/2021/result. Accessed 7 Oct. 2021.

"Product Red." Wikipedia, 22 Oct. 2021, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Product_Red.

Schmale, Jeroen. "'Vluchtige Contacten Ben Ik Gaan Mijden.'" ad.nl, 1 Apr. 2017, www.ad.nl/nieuws/vluchtige-contacten-ben-ik-gaan-mijden~a973401b.

Slappendel, Iris. "The Cyclists' Alliance Rider Survey 2020 | The Cyclists' Alliance." The Cyclists' Alliance | Striving for Fairness in Cycling, 5 Nov. 2020, cyclistsalliance.org/2020/11/the-cyclists-alliance-rider-survey-2020.

Szczepanski, Carolyn. "Women Spend Billions on Bikes." League of American Bicyclists, 11 Sept. 2013, bikeleague.org/content/women-spend-billions-bikes.

"The Evolution of Cycling Shoes." Thomson Bike Tours, 3 Dec. 2020, www.thomsonbiketours.com/blog/2020/12/03/evolution-of-cycling-shoes.

Uchrobak. "Marianne Vos Is the Boss." Outside Online, 30 June 2021, www.outsideonline.com/outdoor-adventure/biking/boss.

Watson, Fuchsia. "Women In Cycling - Going Beyond 'Shrink It and Pink It.'" HuffPost UK, 24 Dec. 2014, www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/fuchsia-watson/women-in-cycling-going-be_b_6041124.html.

Wikipedia contributors. "Equal Rights Amendment." Wikipedia, 24 Sept. 2021, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Equal_Rights_Amendment.

Wikipedia contributors. "List of Career Achievements by Marianne Vos." Wikipedia, 11 Oct. 2021, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_career_achievements_by_Marianne_Vos.

Wunderlich, R. "Gender Differences in Adult Foot Shape: Implications for Shoe Design." PubMed, Apr. 2001, pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/11283437.