

ILLEGAL BIKES IN COMPETITION

Those TOs who attended the TO/EO meeting back in February, will be aware that I presented some slides regarding bikes that are deemed “illegal” by the BTF/ITU rules as their design does not conform to the traditional triangle/diamond frame shape in that they are missing (usually) a seat tube and chainstays so are more of a V shape – often known as “beam” bikes as the top tube looks like a beam connected to a front downtube.

They are deemed illegal as they are inherently less stiff than a traditional design, and therefore could be dangerous. However, modern manufacturing techniques with carbon fibre are overcoming these weakness issues, and the ITU have a process in place where these bikes can be approved for racing in non-drafting events provided the manufacturer supplies appropriate data that satisfies the ITU Technical Committee. Once approved, the list is updated.

The relevant rule is 5.2.b.i & ii. The approved list can be found here -

http://www.triathlon.org/uploads/docs/itu_sport_Non_traditional_or_unusual_bikes_approved_to_be_used_in_ITU_draft_illegal_competitions_20170508.pdf

As you will see, there are only 3 bikes on this list – Cervelo P5X, Ventum One (like a reverse beam bike), and Reap (a UK maker who has yet to fully launch).

The reason for all this is that on Sunday last at Sevenoaks Tri we came across this bike in transition – a Falco V. This one was stealth black (no lines as per photo).



As you will see, it's very similar to the P5X and Reap – and to another brand – Dimond.



Neither the Falco or Dimond have been approved by the ITU, and as Falco are no longer trading it's unlikely this bike will ever be approved. Dimond have also faced some recent questions about safety from a US athlete, Jordan Rupp, who has raced Ironman on it and this has led to an ongoing legal case.

NOTE - An athlete can race on these bikes under Ironman rules without problem.

With regards to Sevenoaks, the athlete concerned had only raced Ironman on the bike and he wasn't aware of the BTF/ITU rule. He is now fully aware of it after a chat with Clare and myself.

We allowed him to race on the bike, but with the proviso that if he was in a podium spot at the end, then I would nullify his result so the podium only had those who raced on legal bikes. This was in our view preferable to either a DQ or a straight, "no you can't race on it". He got a race, and nobody lost out (he came 14th in the end).

The reason for all this is to bring to your attention that these type of bikes may start popping up at local events in the TESE Region. If this Falco pops up at another event, the owner (Kevin Robins of VO2 Maximum Race Team from Tonbridge) knows he should not be racing on it. We've given him a chance to race on it once, he shouldn't be doing so again.

If a bike of this type pops up at event you're Chief TO at, make sure you know what bikes are OK by keeping a download of the ITU list, and if it's not on the list, query the owner about their understanding of the rule. If they are not aware of it, make them aware, and if you decide to let them race I suggest you follow the process I took at Sevenoaks.

PS: we have now come across another unapproved bike similar in design to the Ventum – the TriRig Omni