

SKILLS DRILLS AND BELLYACHES

A Cyclocross Primer

**As demonstrated by Jeremy Powers,
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I'm proud to know the authors of this book. I've been privileged enough to be able to work with Dan and Bill at our yearly 'cross camps throughout the country. They are true cyclocross guys and you can see that throughout these pages. *Skills Drills and Bellyaches* has been years in the making. It is an incredible addition to the cyclocross community.

Dan's and Bill's hard work and determination to see this project through fully has been tremendous. And the photographs by Bruce Buckley do an amazing job bringing to life each skill discussed. This book is meant to be read, studied and passed on to anyone looking to perfect their skill, but my hope is that it lands in the hands of young up-and-comers and newbies to the sport. Each page was crafted with passion, for you to better understand cyclocross. I hope that you can take this into your hometown and teach the next generation our sport how to do these techniques properly so, as a whole, the sport becomes better understood ... and done with proper technique!

The contents of this book are going to help you improve your cyclocross riding without doing any intervals, without any long rides, and without any rigorous training plans. Nailing these concepts and techniques will be one of many steps in a long journey to becoming a cyclo-boss!

I know that I didn't start up as a cyclocross rider knowing the best way to corner, the best way to dismount or the best way to find my pedals at the start. I needed to start at square one just like everyone else. It's resources like this that really can make the difference. A lot of things in 'cross don't come naturally, and it's always great to learn things from the experts. I know I did my fair share of learning over the years!

We've all done that dismount wrong and wondered if we should go to the hospital to check up on our groins. Most of us have mistimed a set of barriers and cleaned our clocks. Enjoy the many, many years of knowledge, the thoughtful tips and the time-honed techniques throughout this book. I look forward to seeing you guys at a 'cross event soon, using all of the techniques you've learned in these pages! Have fun and be safe!

Jeremy Powers

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PREFACE

This book teaches the techniques and skills that all racers, from beginner to elite, should learn and apply to become a better cyclocross racer. It covers basics, such as what to wear and how to get back on your bike after carrying it over an obstacle, as well as more nuanced starting techniques and how to mentally prepare for your race. Even if you have years of 'cross racing under your bibshorts, you can always make improvements to your game. What is on the following pages helps show you the way.

Skills, Drills and Bellyaches serves as a solid primer for new racers, as well as a means for experienced riders to hone their craft. If you master the skills and techniques covered here, you can go into the cyclocross season with the same fitness you had last year, yet achieve better results. Every time you dismount from your bike you are either gaining or losing time on your competition. For instance, if you are a habitual stutter-stepper on remounts, this can cost you around one second each time you get back on your bike. If you are on a course that requires three remounts per lap and you do six laps in your race, that's 18 seconds wasted. Let's say you have similar issues on the dismount. Same math, 18 seconds lost. You are now 36 seconds behind a competitor who is equally fit, but gets on and off the bike more proficiently.

For those familiar with professional road racing, this concept is similar to the coaching philosophy of Dave Brailsford, British cycling director and Team Sky general manager. Brailsford's "aggregation of marginal gains" emphasizes improving every facet of what you do by one percent. This strategy takes every part of racing, be it training, nutrition, cornering, running, sprinting or bike handling, and improves each of those areas. Put all of these seemingly small gains together and you will see significant improvements.

The chapters ahead break down the skills and techniques necessary to race cyclocross. After reviewing the proper skills and techniques for the most common obstacles and course conditions you will face, this book takes you through the preparation needed in the days leading up to a race and what to do once you are racing.

- What should you pack, eat and wear?
- How should you warm up and pre-ride the course?
- How can you get a good start and set up for a strong finish?

We explain how to accomplish each of these skills, and provide detailed visual examples to give the words more meaning.

Whether you need to refine a particular skill set or get a pro tip from U.S. Cyclocross Champion Jeremy Powers (referred to as JPow Tips), this book has something for everyone.