

challenge



H A N D M A D E T I R E S

HOW CAN I PREPARE MY TUBULARS FOR OFF-SEASON STORAGE?

Here are a few tips to help you summer-ize your cyclocross tubulars.

WASH

Wash your wheelset using water with dish soap or diluted Simple Green. Avoid harsh scrubbing of the delicate sidewalls with a stiff-bristled brush. Instead, use a sponge or softer brush. Stiff bristles are OK for the treads.

Thoroughly dry the wheels by hand with a clean towel and let air dry completely. Tip the wheel on its side and tilt slightly one way then the other to let any water trapped in the rim drain.

INSPECTION

Inspect the tread of the tires for cuts, glass, little bits of stone, and abrasion. Check if any lugs are loose or missing. Small cuts can be repaired and filled with Super Glue. Check out the valve cores. Are they bent, loose, dirty? Unscrew and dry them before tightening.

Look at the sidewalls. If your tires have cotton casings (Dugast, Challenge and others) they should be sealed to protect them from moisture. An unprotected cotton sidewall will rot if wet and dry out if stored unsealed. If they are already sealed, inspect the sealant for peeling or bubbles. Dark or black spots indicate moisture and rot. If you need to re-seal, I recommend removing the old before applying a new coat of Aquaseal. Make sure the sidewalls are completely dry before sealing, otherwise you are just sealing in the moisture. If you do re-seal, wait until the sealant is dry before proceeding to the next step.

Inflate the tires to 30-40 psi and check the glue job by trying to roll the tire off the rim. Don't check just one spot, go all the way around the rim. If you have to re-glue, I suggest waiting until late summer or whenever you are a few weeks out from your first race.

STORAGE

Store the wheels either in wheelbags or on your bike. In either case hang them - bike on a hook or wheel bags from a hook. Leave some air in the tires and check them every month or so. This will help the sidewall hold its shape and avoid pinching or folding. Latex tubes will lose some air over time. Lastly, whether the wheels are in bags or on your bike, put them in a temperature controlled, dry environment out of direct sunlight like a basement (or garage if you live somewhere where it does not drop below 45°).

Follow these steps and your tubulars will be ready to go when September comes.