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SCOPE R5D WHEELSET REVIEW

FOR

- Stiff and fast rolling
- Lightweight
- Impeccable value for money
- Swappable end caps mean the wheels are compatible with any bike

AGAINST

- Ride quality can be harsh if paired with regular clinchers

Founded in 2013, Scope Cycling might be a relatively new wheel brand but in a short space of time,

the Dutch company has designed and crafted a comprehensive portfolio boasting wheelsets for both the disc-brake convert and rim-brake purist. (There is also an option for gravel riders and mountain bikers).

Sitting at the very top of Scope Cycling's product hierarchy is the R5 wheelset, pictured here in disc-brake guise. These 55mm-deep rims have been designed with one purpose only: to slice through the air as quickly and efficiently as possible while still providing stiffness and pliancy levels of the highest order.

As a rider who much prefers the shallower rim architecture of a lightweight climbing wheelset, I was unsure as to how these particular wheels would behave on my local training roads in and around the Surrey Hills but was assured by Scope's marketing manager that they would be right at home. If anything, Farnham's undulating topography - comprising rolling hills and steep, wall-like kickers not to mention variable road surfaces - would be a worthy test-bed to gauge just how good they are as an all-round wheel option.

DESIGN AND AESTHETICS

Developed in-house at its headquarters in the Netherlands, Scope has focused heavily on refining the shape, width, weight and stiffness of

the R5 wheels, which have been verified through Computational Fluid Dynamics (CFD) and wind-tunnel testing.

However it's not merely weight and stiffness that dictates the performance of an aero wheelset but rather how it offsets the drag/crosswind ratio - too deep means less control, too shallow means less speed. It's a tricky exercise but Scope seems to have struck the right balance using wind-crafted toroidal rim profiles to keep things fast and predictable.

The wheels certainly look impressive - the unidirectional carbon fibre finish is truly striking and contrasts the gunmetal hubs and black spokes quite vividly. In terms of colourways, the wheels can be specced with either black or white Scope logos but the company's Custom Program allows a degree of





personalisation with the choice of ten high-quality foil decals on offer. These can either be applied at the factory if ordered together with the wheels or retrofitted should the need for change arise later down the line.

SPECIFICATIONS AND BUILD

Scope describes its wheelsets as complete systems, meaning every component used in its construction has been carefully considered to deliver the best performance. The 55mm profile combines with a 26mm external and 19mm internal rim width, which have helped improve ride quality, stability and handling thanks to the rim's ability to accommodate a bigger volume tyre but more on that later...

A complete R5d wheelset tips the scales at 1632g (755g front/877g rear) which is on par if not

lighter than some of its more established rivals. To achieve this Scope has used what it calls 'Local Reinforcement Technology' (LRT) which strengthens the rim at the spoke holes instead of the entire wheel circumference resulting in a 10 per cent reduction in weight with no compromise on durability and resilience.

The wheels are built using sealed Scope-built hubs laced in a 21 front/24 rear configuration with Sapim CX-Ray spokes. SKF industrial bearings are standard fare but can be upgraded to CeramicSpeed on request. The hub flanges feature wider diameters for increased rigidity, stability and lateral stiffness.

As has become the norm in recent years, the Scope R5d wheels are tubeless-ready and come fitted with pre-installed rim tape and valves as well as an adaptor ring for 10-speed cassettes (thru-axles are not included in the package).

PERFORMANCE, RIDE AND HANDLING

While it's tricky to put aero claims to the test in real-world conditions, the Scope R5d wheels felt notably quicker than my standard 35mm Hollowgram disc wheels in all situations. They certainly feel really fast. In fact, my average speed increased by between 1 and 1.5kph with little if any extra effort or watt output. According to Scope, the R5 is the stiffest wheelset in

the segment and while they are notably rigid they never felt uncomfortable or overly harsh, regardless of the road surface. Of course this can be offset by using tubeless tyres which allows for the use of wider tyres and lower tyre pressures to soften the ride quality and dial in more compliance - a must considering the choppy road surfaces of the UK.

Up until now I've never been an evangelist for tubeless tyre technology but my stance on the concept has changed, the system works really well and does a fine job of ironing out road imperfections. While Scope recommends wrapping the rims in Schwalbe Pro One rubber (the wheels were developed in conjunction with Schwalbe) I found myself swapping them after just 400km for Vittoria Corsa TLR tyres as, in my opinion, they are more resilient and offer better puncture protection, comfort and traction.

In terms of performance the R5 wheels are no slouch when it comes to the climbs and excel on rolling terrain where you can carry speed and momentum. While I didn't test them up anything longer than a seven-minute climb I never loathed the added heft over my climbing wheels - in fact, I'd class them as pretty good all rounders if I'm honest. While the 55mm profile is not immune to crosswinds, they never felt twitchy regardless of the severity of the

SCOPE R5D REVIEWED

SCORE
★★★★★

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wind - instead only minor corrections were needed as the wheels tracked accurately and predictably.

Power transfer is immediate thanks to the six-pawl freehub body that offer 72 points of engagement. Speaking of the freehub, the ratchet system makes an intoxicatingly satisfying noise - not too unlike a swarm of agitated hornets, before a low-pitched thrum amplified by the deep rim profiling, signals that you're back on the power again. It's all very granular and tactile.

VERDICT

The Scope R5 disc wheels have been manufactured to go the distance and be used day in day out with assurance, a 3-year warranty is standard. They are easily one of the fastest options in the segment -

light and stiff, they offer all the qualities of the more established segment players at a lower price point.

In terms of performance, the Scope R5 can be used as both a training and racing wheelset. When paired to tubeless tyres, the wheels offer a comfortable and cossetting ride quality without compromising speed or agility.

After 3 months and over 1800km worth of rigorous testing I have nothing negative to report. In fact, I highly recommend the Scope R5d wheels to anybody looking at gaining an aero edge over the competition, not to mention adding a touch more aggression to their bike's facade.

TECH SPEC

Price: (Starting from) US\$1549 / £1298 / AU\$2298

Material: Carbon

Depth: 55mm

Brake: Disc (available in rim-brake)

Tyre format: Tubeless and clincher (23mm-30mm)

Rim width (internal): 19mm

Spoke count: 21 front/24 rear

Weight: 1632g



SCOPE