

PINKBIKE TECH

Cedric Gracia on Oval Chainrings - Interview

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pb Cedric Gracia and I spent the afternoon riding the trails near Laguna Beach, California, and talking about oval chainrings while he was between EWS races this Spring.

Cedric Gracia has been riding Rotor Q-Rings on his Santa Cruz EWS racing machines this season, and he has become quite a fan. To be fair, the Spanish component maker that popularized oval chainrings among elite-level racers is one of Gracia's sponsors - so I'd expect him to furnish me with an obligatory gush about their performance. He is a consummate professional, and plugging sponsors goes with the territory. That said, however, Gracia is at a place in his career where he can probably choose any crank or chainring combination he pleases and get paid to ride them, so when he went on about how much he liked his Q-Rings, I figured I'd better take notes.



pb Gracia runs a Rotor Rex 1 aluminum crankset and a QX 1 chainring. Three mounting positions on the chainring are used to time the rider's power-stroke with his or her riding position over the crankset, and to compensate for variations in leg kinematics.

RC: What is your present crank and chainring setup?

Cedric: For the first EWS I was riding with 32 [QX1 chainring](#) and 175-millimeter [Rex 1](#) cranks, because I knew it will be a lot of climbing, and I would need all the help I could on those climbs. At Sea Otter, I put a 34 for the DH and Dual Slalom on my Hightower.

RC: What inspired you to try an oval chainring?

Cedric: I wanted to try out oval chainrings because I'd read and heard about stuff like better traction and faster acceleration - two things that are super useful to me. The fact that I can time my chainrings is an added edge, which I think everyone benefit from if they tried oval rings.

RC: How long did it take to get used to



oval Q-rings? Did you perceive any benefits?

Cedric: Well, I expected at least a week or two, but at the end, after couple hours, I felt great on it. Like I say, the Q-Rings make me a better climber and my pedal stroke is a lot better and a lot more consistent.

RC: Q-rings have three sets of mounting holes for timing purposes. Which option did you settle upon?

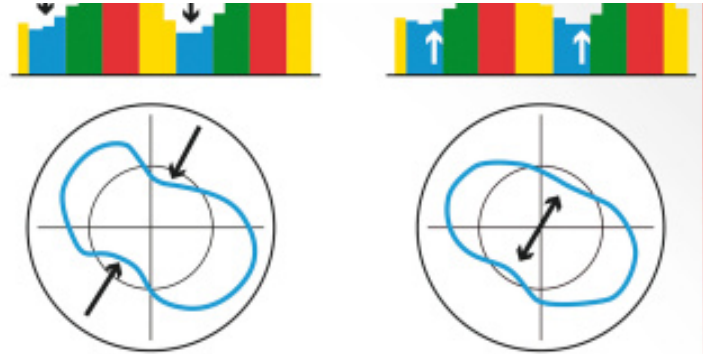
Cedric: I ride with the third position. That's where I feel the best for my enduro style of riding. They're called OCP and stand for Optimum Chainring Position which, as you mentioned, can be timed to the precise point at which you deliver maximum power during a pedal rotation.

RC: I understand that you are co-developing a new crankset with Rotor, can you tell us anything about it?

Cedric: Rotor has products in development all the time, but it's up to them to make the info public. Rotor depends on athletes like me to test products in real time - to take testing out of the lab and onto the trail. I send them my results and recommendations for improving the products I'm testing - they have the option to take advantage of the data.

RC: What is the possibility that oval chainrings will go mainstream?

Cedric: Yes, I am sure. Who will not use free help? More power, better stoke, better climbing - it just makes you a better rider!



pb Rotor has done extensive comparative testing to verify the attributes of ovalized chainrings. Torque measured at the crank axle shows that the round chainring (left) produces a more erratic pedaling stroke, while the oval Q-Ring (right) produces more consistent torque throughout the pedal circle (I did this comparison test and it produced similar results - RC).