

Data Dump

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I'm reading a book called "Soccernomics," which applies economic analysis to soccer. It's similar to "Moneyball," the ground-breaking book about baseball's Oakland A's.

In "Soccernomics" the authors' number-crunching debunks much traditional wisdom in the sport, explaining, for instance, why English scouts tend to favor blond players. (They stand out on the field, appealing to scouts' "sight-based prejudices.")

All of which made me think about the importance of numbers in cycling.

Sure, you need a high watts-per-kilogram (strength-to-weight) ratio in order to kick butt. But what are the hidden metrics that contribute to success? I've tortured the data and uncovered the critical predictors. Call it Cyclenomics:

---**Cost of bicycle.** Between \$2,000 and \$5,000: Your lightweight bike makes you a better rider. Over \$5,000: You are a poseur who doesn't ride much. Under \$250: Real cyclists don't shop Walmart.

---**Number of cycling websites bookmarked.** More than 6: You spend too much time online and not enough in the saddle. Fewer than 3: You're out of the loop on cycling equipment, gossip and drug suspensions. Because you are boring, no one will train with you and you won't improve.

---**Number of traffic lights on your commute.** More than 7: Your route is too busy and dangerous to achieve optimal fitness. Not only can't you get a good workout in stop-and-go traffic, but there's a 3-in-5 probability that someone will door you.

---**Number of cycling T-shirts in dresser.** More than 20: A veteran of numerous races and/or organized rides, you have the experience -- and the future bike-cleaning rags -- necessary to win.

---**Ratio of household chores completed to hours ridden.** Ideal ratio: 2 to 1. Any higher and you're not riding enough. Any lower and you can't focus on training because you are getting divorced.