

## If I'm "training", what is it I'm "training" for?

I arrived only a minute or two early, yet the only person in sight was Eric. Odd, given that it was going to possibly rain later in the day (which it did, lightly), so you'd expect to see more people out riding in the morning. And gradually more did show up, with George, Ludo, Kevin and Marcus adding to the mix. Actually we picked up Marcus on the way but before the start of the climb. Marcus would never want to miss the opportunity to pull us up the hill!

And pull he did, along with me, George & Kevin. Somehow, not sure how it happened, I learned to stick to Marcus's wheel like glue. This morning, that glue lasted to the winter regroup at the Huddart Park entrance, where I was a bit surprised to look around and discover that, for a few moments, it was just the two of us. Ludo & Eric were riding at a more-sensible pace, although I'm beginning to think Ludo is saving himself for the sprints.

The intervals I've started doing are paying off; I did three of them again today, including one on that nasty middle section after the hairpin. It's an interesting mental game, figuring out how far you dare let the guys riding faster (today, that was Kevin & George & Marcus) before coming after them... again. And again. Repeat until dead.

The final sprint, on Albion heading into Olive Hill, was one I thought I had in the bag, keeping an eye on George and whoever might be with him. That was when I heard something on my left, noticed something coming up fast (who?) and had to get very quickly back in the game. I don't know if Ludo's figured out tactics or I left the door a bit too wide open. I had decided from the beginning (of the sprint) to go from the front, always a bit risky, but it's too easy otherwise (unless Chris or James shows up; then I need all the help I can get). I did keep the speed down at the start, reducing the advantage of those behind a bit, but that didn't stop Ludo. As Ludo gets faster on the climbs and develops speed on the flats, he'll figure out how to run me into the ground before we get to the sprints, and then I'm toast.

This is the first time I've taken "training" seriously in quite a while, and the question was asked, why? Not really sure why. If I didn't have a family and a business, I have no doubt I'd be racing again, but that's not going to happen (although riding in the 55+ age group would make things interesting, being at the younger end of things). This is more of a personal battle, myself against myself, or maybe against my lungs. I've got the right bike; now it's time to get the right body.