

112 miles in February. On a beautiful day like this, why not?



It was Thursday the subject came up- where are we going to ride on Sunday. And both Kevin and I were thinking the same thing, but there's this strange unwritten rule that, if it's the Santa Cruz loop, it can't be spoken. It's simply understood.

It wasn't going to be fast; we knew that ahead of time. It's February, after all. The "fast" longer rides come later in the year. But Kevin's been riding better lately, keeping up with the faster guys on the climbs (which means he's way ahead of me), and I'm good for 100 miles pretty much anytime.

This was the "classic" Santa Cruz loop, heading up Old LaHonda, over Haskins almost to Pescadero, taking the Cloverdale/Gazos Creek "shortcut" to Highway 1, then south to Davenport for lunch, further south to Santa Cruz, up Highway 9 to Skyline, north on Skyline to Sky Londa and then descend back into Woodside on 84.

It's a rare winter day that you can ride without legwarmers, baselayers or long-fingered gloves, but we took our chances that today would be that rare day and we were almost right. The forecast had shown lows in the upper-50s, but there were parts of the run to the coast where we saw it drop as low as 45. Thankfully it warmed up as we got out of the trees, so we didn't quite get to that "sure wish we'd brought warm stuff" stage.

Winds were very light, which meant we missed out on the often-strong tailwind on the coast. But better no wind than a headwind!

Lunch at the Davenport Cafe was as usual... phenomenal. Best burritos anywhere. Service was a bit slow today, but worth the wait. These are not quantity burritos, they're quality. One of the things that makes the difference is that the meat is lightly crisped (probably fried for a bit after cooking), giving it a different type of texture than the typical burrito.

The only bad thing about stopping for lunch in Davenport is that you immediately have to tackle a small hill when you start out, but it is small, and about 10 minutes later it was time to clear out the cylinders and see what I could do. There was a chance I could pay for the effort later, but it felt like the thing to do at the time, and it felt good. I've ridden that segment quite a bit faster at other times, but those were, frankly, wind-assisted. Today, it was just me. And of the 9 people riding that segment on Strava today, mine was tied for fastest, so I'm ok with it. :-)

Highway 9 was the usual slog to Boulder Creek, narrow road, fair amount of traffic, but could have been worse; the road was closed between Santa Cruz and Felton for maintenance, but not closed in the way that would keep bikes out. Of course, we didn't know that would be the case, just hoped it would!

Boulder Creek was the usual stop for Mtn Dew before the run up to Skyline. Kevin was running low on energy while I was feeling better as the ride went. So no records broken there either, but Kevin became re-energized upon seeing that Mr. Mustard was back in business at Saratoga Gap. Heading north on Skyline we were passed by someone near Page Mill, and Kevin would have none of that. The guy had passed us on a climb and seemed to have a lot more horsepower than we did, but looks like it was mostly for show; he started slowing down after a bit, and Kevin sped up. We passed him in a mile or so and by the time we covered another mile, he couldn't be seen.

In the end it was 112 miles that felt like a lot less.



Cloverdale Road (a shortcut to Highway 1)



The usual beautiful view of the coast



World's Best Burrito? Maybe! Davenport Cafe.



Mandatory Mtn Dew stop at Boulder gas station



Mr Mustard is back!



View of the coast from Skyline, towards end of ride