

## The planned ride didn't include mucking around off Skyline in the rain



This ride had enough issues already; I certainly didn't need to backtrack at this point! Another solo, late ride, thanks to Kevin's continuing kidney pains (which hopefully will go away as soon as they remove the temporary stent). This was a day I planned something to, as Calvin's Dad (from Calvin & Hobbes) would say, build character. "Go do something you hate. It builds character." So instead of the usual Pescadero/Tunitas run, or a slightly-shortened version skipping Pescadero, I mapped out a route that dropped by our store in Los Altos, headed up Redwood Gulch to Highway 9, then north on Skyline to 84, drop down into Woodside and head home.

On the way, I added some extra squiggly stuff (Strava art?) between Arastradero and Foothill College, taking roads I've rarely traveled, just 'cuz. On Strava, when I mapped it out, it didn't seem quite as hilly as it was in real life. Hilly not in a good way; just obnoxious little climbs you can't develop a rhythm on and wonder, what's the point? Not recommended.



Getting pretty cool & sloppy by the time I reached Redwood Gulch I should mention that the ride started out pretty nice, too nice actually. When it hit 76 degrees shortly after starting, I had serious concern about over-dressing! It quickly cooled down a bit, and by the time I got to the base of Redwood Gulch, it was 55 and sloppy. Sloppy enough that I gave serious consideration to turning back, thinking it might be too slippery to climb something that steep. I did slip a bit, but that just added to the challenge. It's Redwood Gulch after all. No matter what it's going to be nasty, so why not embrace the nastiness?

By the time I hit Highway 9 I was giving serious thought to turning back down the hill, as it just got wetter and colder as I climbed towards Skyline. But...that wasn't the plan. So I continued, surprised to see an occasional other cyclist out there in the slop, doing a number on their nice road bikes (same as I was) instead of riding something more appropriate for the conditions.



No Mr. Mustard!!!

The first real indication that I'd made a bad decision came at the top of Highway 9. No Mr. Mustard!!! I hadn't eaten since leaving home, and was thinking at least a bag of chips might not be such a bad idea. Not day. I soldiered on, now with wind added to the mix of rain & decreasing temps. But, I was getting into it. Skyline was going by pretty quickly. Until... about a mile before the Page Mill intersection, there's a guy telling people to turn around. Somebody had knocked down a power line. I tried to find a way around it, in the mud, totally fouling my cleats, to no avail.

Not looking forward to retracing my steps, especially feeling so close to home (nearly all of my climbing now done), but what can you do. I descended 9 all the way down instead of taking Redwood Gulch, because I didn't feel confident there'd be enough traction on such a steep road to keep myself upright, plus it would be a lot of extra wear on the brake pads and rims.

Time was running out though. Only so much daylight, my front & rear lights were for being seen (as opposed to seeing the road), and I hadn't eaten in a very long time. I called home to let my wife know I'd be running quite late; she eventually convinced me to meet here in Los Altos and get sagged back. A disappointment, but still ended up with more miles than the original plan, and lots more suffering.

Calvin's dad would have been proud.