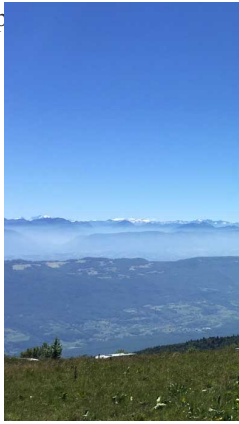


A ***VERY*** eventful day following the TdF on Sunday (entry after this will explain)



I actually felt pretty good at the top, but not quite in the celebrative mood as Kevin, 5 fingers for the 5 big Cols this trip



View from the top of the Col du Grand Colombier



Our spot to view the race was pretty spectacular, and should have been the most-memorable part of the day. The next entry will explain why that wasn't the case.

Finally got a chance to start catching up and report on quite the day last Sunday, two days and a world away.

Overall one of our best, and don't want to say worst but certainly most-challenging day ever at the Tour de France. It started out well; headed out on an 8:30am train from Lyon to Culoz to catch the stage ending on the Col du Grand Colombier. Train was on time, and the route I'd mapped out worked great.

The climb is incredible; from the route we took, it starts out fairly "easy" (about like climbing Kings), passing through a number of tiny villages, and then begins to ramp up... and up. Thankfully you get a change to take a rest on grades maybe 7-8% before the next 14% grade hits you. I was watching my power and heart rate, trying to find a pace I could maintain and not end up flaming out like I did on the Tourmalet. For the first 2/3rds of the climb, I might have even had a bit of an advantage on Kevin, but as we neared the

top, where you go around this corner thinking you must be near the top and then look up... WAY up... and realize those people wouldn't be lining the hillside if that wasn't the route... that's where Kevin took off and I couldn't respond, only watch.



If Elton John attended the TdF, this is probably what he'd look like...

We arrived at the top a good hour ahead of my plan (which was admittedly conservative and based on Kevin still having some knee issues, which thankfully didn't materialize). This wasn't our destination though, nor did it have food. The top of a huge climb at the Tour de France and no food? What's with that???

We headed down the other side, continuing on the race route, stopping at the top of what would be the Lacets du Grand Colombier (the final climb) that the riders would loop back up before finally descending to the finish. One more time to do the Caravan thing and then we descended to find a good spot to view the race.

Afterwards we raced back down towards the train station, wanting to catch the earliest-possible train back to Lyon since we had to pack the bikes and try to get a few hours sleep before catching a 5:50am train to CDG (Paris airport). Didn't quite work out as planned. That's in the next entry, which should go live around 9am 7/21. --MikeJ