

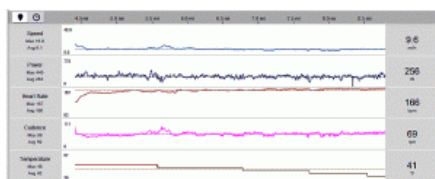
## Another monkey off my back, but HUGE swing-and-a-miss on another



It's tough to say if I'm coming back or seeing a temporary reduction in mediocrity. Hopefully the former. Last week I got under 30 minutes (finally!) on Kings again, and today it was looking like I could get under 29. It-was-so-close. Strava says 29:00. Oh my goodness how many opportunities did I have to make up a single second???! I can play it back in my mind and find quite a few of them. However, I did manage to go over 1000 VAM (and cut that one close too, at just 1003). "VAM" is the number of vertical meters you can climb in an hour, so 1000 VAM means a bit over 3000ft elevation gain in an hour. To put that in painful perspective, a former Pro bike racer, Phil Gaimon, just set a new record last week on Old LaHonda. 13 minutes, 26 seconds. VAM of an unbelievable 1,770. Average watts 470. Impressive.

It was a damp morning, but that's better than the rain originally forecast. Kevin, Kevin, Karen, George and Jr today, with younger Kevin having fun at the front, way out in front, finishing at 25:56. To put THAT in perspective, my fastest time on Strava (2008-on) is 26:12. He finished dropping people just past the wide-open clearing (1.41 miles to go).

I will admit to feeling much better than normal this morning. Hard to put a finger on why. Maybe because we didn't ride hard on Sunday (I challenge anyone to find a hill between Davis and Sacramento). Maybe because I woke up a bit earlier than normal so my body was a bit more ready to go? It certainly wasn't due to the weather. Mid to low-40s; I climb better a good 20 degrees warmer than that. I did find my heart responded much more smoothly this morning than last Thursday, where I just could not get it up where it needs to be for a hard effort. Whatever, I'll take what I can get, and this morning, I felt like I got something.



The graph at the right shows what makes a good, steady climb. Especially nice to see the heart rate kick up pretty quickly once the hill starts, and then ever-so-gradually move from 160bpm to a final 166 at the very top. No dips where I ran out of steam, and no spikes. Cadence and power are also very consistent. Sure, it would be better if everything was a bit higher, of course! But this is better than I've seen in a very long time.