

## Riding well despite anti-EPO drug!



I approached today's ride with a bit of apprehension, based on this week's bloodwork showing that the stuff I'm taking to lower my too-high platelet count is also depressing my hematocrit level (as is expected to happen). For those not in the know, keeping your hematocrit level high is what doping is all about in competitive cycling. That EPO stuff you hear about, the stuff Lance was using, artificially raises it above your normal level, which allows your blood to carry more oxygen to your muscles. Normal hematocrit levels run between 39-48% or so. You don't want to go too high, because your blood gets sludgy and your heart may decide it's had enough and stop working. My hematocrit had been around 43-44% since the beginning of time, but has been gradually dropping due to the anti-EPO I'm taking, and on Friday's test, came to 38%. Yuck.

So as I began this morning's ride with Kevin, I wasn't sure how slow I'd be on Old LaHonda, but figured it wouldn't be terribly fast. Turns out I didn't have to worry; Strava showed 22:19 which is my faster time in well over a year, and if I'd just been 4 seconds faster, it would have been a two-year best. Strange thing, that. I don't know that this is a trend I'll be able to buck much longer though; it's likely my dosage is going to be increased soon, which will drop my hematocrit even more, and at some point, something's gotta give. Either that or my body is re-wiring itself.

Just another great day for a ride in the SF Bay Area. Mid-70s, so a bit cooler than France, and no fancy French pastries or cheap huge bottles of Orangina, but the Pescadero Bakery does a good stand-in.

Tunitas? Well, we didn't attack Tunitas like we did Old LaHonda. Seems like we both ran out of gas at some point, but a nice ride up the hill.