

First 30 miles and I wanted to call for sag. Next 40 were awesome!



This is what awaits you when you're having a tough day and voluntarily make it even tougher. First things first; yes, it's been a few days and we did ride Thursday. It was wet, and it was really not a day I wanted to ride anything but my fastest, lightest, easiest bike to ride up a hill. My Trek Emonda, not my rain bike. But rain bike it was, and I lost track of Kevin (kid) and Karen mid-way through the park. It did get a bit easier once onto Kings, but I only started feeling semi-normal after being up on Skyline for a bit. We had to skip the West Old LaHonda section because I had to catch a flight out of town in a couple hours; too bad because with the receding storm it would have been beautiful.

The original plan (remember, there's always a plan) was that I'd be gone on bike industry biz through Sunday, but thankfully the meetings ended earlier than expected Saturday, allowing me to catch the last flight out of town (Colorado Springs) that afternoon, instead of Sunday. Which meant... I'd get to ride Sunday!

Of course Kevin had already made plans with his girlfriend, knowing that I was supposed to be out of town, so it was a long solo ride. It originally wasn't going to be quite so long, maybe 50 miles, but a tough 50 miles. I headed south through the foothills, stopping for coffee in Los Altos before heading up Redwood Gulch. I hate Redwood Gulch by the way. I was going to take it super-super-easy, and would have, except that I spotted another rider about a minute ahead of me and he became my rabbit. I didn't figure I could possibly catch him, but I wasn't going to let him distance me either. But, with nothing in my legs, it was an academic exercise in my head, not on the road.

When I finally hit 9 I was hoping I'd feel better, but no, I was climbing without joy. By the time I reached the top, I felt like phoning for a sag wagon, a feeling reinforced by the lack of Mr. Mustard's hot dog & coke stand. That's when I made the decision. Instead of making the ride easier, make it harder. Head south on Skyline (further from home, adding miles and climbing) to see the rebuilt section where the rode had collapsed a year or two ago. And somehow, heading up the grade, I started feeling better. The rebuilt section of the road is, well, a rebuilt section of road. You wonder why it took so long, and maybe why they didn't simply cut into the hill a bit instead, but it's nice to have the last of the major winter road projects finished.

Riding back on Skyline, I found I was able to attack the smaller hills pretty hard. Really hard in fact. An amazing turnaround from how I felt earlier in the ride. My original plan for the ride was a bit over 50 miles, and after adding the detour to the rebuilt-road section, 60 miles. Now, I was thinking, why not make it 70? So I continued north all the way to Kings, even a bit further to make sure I'd get the mileage needed. Dropping down into Woodside it was looking like I might end up just a bit shy so I did an out & back on Runnymede (the road that runs parallel to Canada, accessed near the overpass close to Canada College) and finished the ride with 70.44 miles.

The difference I felt between mile 30 and those further on was an unbelievable contrast. I really can't explain it; hard to believe it should take me 2.5 hours to warm up. But maybe it does, maybe I've just got to make all my rides a whole lot longer. If only I had the time!