

## Haven't ridden 100+ miles since July; not so hard as I thought it would be!



We were really looking forward to our favorite Burrito place in Davenport, only to find it's a shell, turning into something else. The Whaler Cafe isn't a bad second choice though. Great coffee!

The original idea was to ride the Primavera Century, a great ride in the east bay, but things have been crazy this past couple weeks at the shop so we missed out on the entry deadline. Didn't realize it would close before the ride until looking at their website last night. Yes, very poor planning on my part. So now what?

It's not like we couldn't do our own 100 mile ride. Looking back on things, Kevin and I used to do the Santa Cruz loop (112 miles) 4 times per year (actually 9 times in 2011!) since 2010. But in 2015 we did the loop just once, we skipped 2016 entirely, and just once in 2017.

At some point you start wondering, are you capable of things today that used to be pretty much routine? There was a little bit of that running through my head last night, especially since this would be my first century on my higher meds level (the stuff I take that deals with my mild bone marrow cancer, stuff that basically lowers my red blood cell numbers, the very opposite of what a cyclist wants to have happen).

Oh, one other advantage to doing the Santa Cruz loop vs the Primavera. Kevin and I can sleep in an extra hour or so! So that's what we did, got up just past 7, watched the end of Liege-Bastogne-Liege (one of the "classic" early-season european bike races), and headed out at about 8:39.

Knowing we had a long day ahead of us, we took it pretty easy up Old LaHonda and Haskins, settling in for the long haul. This wasn't about setting records; this was about proving that 100+ miles was still something we could do. And prove it we did, just two minutes off our total riding time from last July, and within the pretty narrow range of "normal" times for us. Would have been nice to have a strong tailwind on the coast, but at least it wasn't a headwind.

The worst part of the ride is always the same. That long slog through the San Lorenzo Valley, from Santa Cruz to the start of the Highway 9 climb. It's funny how much better you feel once the road begins to definitively head upwards. Kevin was begging to sag a bit until we got into "familiar territory" a big higher up, when he began to put out some serious watts. Somehow, I stayed on his wheel.

No Mr. Mustard at Saratoga Gap though! We did bring quarters for the machine at the Fire Station but... their machine isn't working. If staff is around, they might open it up for you though, but I wouldn't count on it. Fortunately, we had fueled up pretty heavily at our stop in Boulder Creek, just before the climb.

Total riding time was 6 hours, 50 minutes. I was expecting something longer than that. Overall, really happy with how things went.