

## First Thursday ride finishing "on schedule" in... years? And a solo ride at that!



Once in a while it's nice having the whole world to yourself, like I did this morning. You get so used to riding the same route with others, matching pace (or trying to finish a climb on the same day), finding common ground with the others on the ride, that you can forget what it's like to be out there on your own, with nothing but the road and scenery keeping you company (and doing a pretty good job at it).

This morning was one of those times. Normally I'd at least have Kevin (kid) with me, but he screwed up the night prior and took a double dose of his epilepsy meds by accident, which was causing him to see double. Not a good thing on a bike. Nobody else showed up either, which is unusual for the summer, although it's possible some were deterred by the gray morning and heavy fog that you could see hugging Skyline from miles away. I wondered where I'd find my motivation, even thinking, briefly, that maybe I ought to stay in the foothills and not head on up. Very briefly. That's just not how I roll.

I wasn't feeling fast, but I was definitely feeling consistent. I found a pace I could settle into and just keep going, from beginning to end. Even the fog burned off nicely just before the top, allowing for some very nice views.

Average weighted power increased from the typical 202-208 watts up to 217, with overall average, at 192, higher than I recall seeing in recent history. The higher overall average likely reflects that, without anyone to draft, I was "on" for the entire ride. Average speed came in at 15.9mph, so yes, I've got something I need to work on there! Too close to 16 to ignore. Back in the day, my average speed used to be 16.4-16.6 or so. But perhaps most important was getting back to the start on-time. The schedule for the ride, outside of winter when we slow down a bit, is supposed to have us back at the start between 9:18 & 9:22am. Generally Thursday rides, heading up through the park, are a couple minutes slower than Tuesday rides, so I was really happy to arrive back at the start at 9:22am. I did cut it pretty close though; it was actually 9:22 and 47 seconds. On the other hand, I was delayed 1 minutes, 8 seconds (but who's counting?) for a bit of touch-up on the new roadwork near the bottom of 84.

I think I'm ok. I've given up a bit more than I'd like on the climbs, but I can still ride pretty hard, pretty long. And that occasional solo ride feels a bit like a reset button has been pushed, something that needs to be done every once in a while, just because. Kind of like how you have to reset your modem and/or router to keep your internet connection intact every couple weeks. Nobody can really tell you why it has to be done, it's just common knowledge that it works.