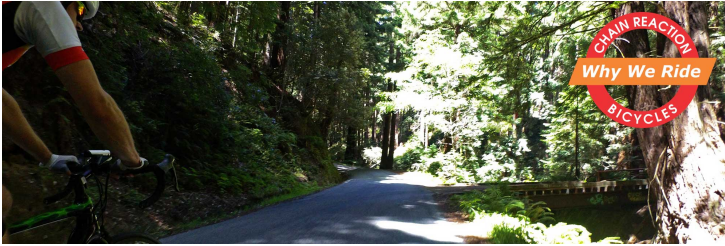


Avenging The Hammer of Thor!



This is where the fun really begins on Tunitas Creek, the start of the infamous "Hammer of Thor" segment. 1.7 miles of pain or fun or maybe both. This was an interesting ride! After an extremely busy and sometimes-stressful day at the shop Saturday, I didn't exactly feel "rested & relaxed" at the start of the ride. In fact, heading up Old LaHonda, I felt sluggish and not exactly enthusiastic. It was a struggle to finish under 25 minutes even. Kevin put up with me though, and, as usual, things got better once we got to... the other side.

Lots of lizards on the West side of Old LaHonda, but no snakes yet. Doesn't seem to have been much of a spring & summer for snakes, with our warm spells lasting only a day or two, and coming pretty rarely. We did see the usual turtles at the LaHonda duck pond. And then on to Haskins. I usually do OK on Haskins, but wasn't so sure today. I did a bit better than OK, posting my best time in a bit over a year, meaning I was faster today than I've been since before taking the anti-EPO meds for my weird bone marrow issue. I was watching the numbers on my computer, finishing at 9:58 and trust me, 9:58 feels one heck of a lot faster than 10:00, even though it's just two seconds difference.

Pescadero? the usual great sandwich, cookie for Kevin, pastry for me. Stage Road? Well, our string of rare tailwinds heading north came to an end! That's actually a bad news/good news sort of thing though; without a tailwind, you're not busting your tail trying to beat old Strava times.

Tunitas, that's where it got interesting. Nothing fast, in fact pretty slow on the lower flatter section. But once we got onto the real climb, I'm not sure what happened but I had legs. I was able to push down hard, in higher gears, and go. And I could keep on going too! Fastest time on that segment since April 17, 2016. Kevin even had issues and dropped back, expecting to catch me on the fast run on the top flatter part. He was very disappointed that I actually stopped, just past the segment end, to relieve myself instead of giving him something to chase. He did, however, drop me like a rock once we got past Star Hill, earning his PR for that segment. He's going to be very unhappy when I tell him my PR on that segment is 5 seconds faster!

It turned out to be a really nice ride, and it's possible I benefitted from the additional ride Wednesday (July 4th), beefing up my quality mileage a bit. I'm needing more of that in the days ahead; the trip to France is a week and a half away, with bigger hills and longer mountains!