

A great ride in the cold



Last night I knew it was going to be cold. You could feel something in the air that the thermometer wasn't registering, as if it were preparing your bones for what was coming. When it's 70 degrees inside but you feel like the heater's not on. You might think you're coming down with something, but you aren't; it's more like a premonition. A warning.

It's been getting progressively-colder lately, but not yet anything below 34F or so, and any way you look at it, you don't get "credit" for riding when it's 34. Unless it's raining. 34 & raining is just plain nuts; you can't protect yourself, as the rain helps the cold soak through anything you might be wearing. It can't be stopped.

But "just" cold is doable, and I was fully into doable mode this morning. Kevin was initially surprised when I told him this was a morning for full thermal tights, not just leg warmers, but it was a good call. Along with wool socks, toe warmers, booties, base layer/jersey/another base layer/jersey jacket on top. 4 layers. And a hat. Kevin's idea to add the hat just before heading out, and I think that was also a good call.

Now, the last time I rode when it was really cold was February two years ago, made memorable by sliding out on black ice and cracking my pelvis in two places. So no surprise that we took it pretty easy through that corner on the way to the start. But, thankfully, no ice. The hillside that soaks up rain until it can't hold it anymore, then releases it onto the road, hasn't seen enough rain yet.

I think we were both a bit surprised that we had company today, both Kevin (former pilot, now retired) and Karen. Kevin (pilot, not the former kid) was dogging it ever so slightly, so I hung back with him on Kings while Kevin (former kid) rode on ahead with Karen. I still had some fun, racing back up to them a few times, then dropping back again. It felt good.

It also felt really, really good to be climbing, after hitting 29.3F just before Kings tilted upward. You don't appreciate how nice 35 degrees can feel... downright tropical!

We watched for ice on Skyline (thankfully none, until we got to some frosty pavement at the 84/35 intersection), then headed east to West Old LaHonda. Nice day, nice views. Descending 84 we were taking it a bit easy, not too easy, and got slightly spooked by a woman cyclist who felt ok riding down the hill just a bit faster than us. #Respect of #Nut, not sure which.

It really felt nice being out there today, and seeing the temp drop below 30 added icing to the cake. It's one thing to reach freezing; it's another to say you were out riding when it was 20-something. Even if just by .7 degrees