

3rd 100+ mile ride in 4 weeks but that's not the story?



This was not supposed to be the ride's main story. Not quite the Father's Day ride I'd planned. Trying to get ready for France so Kevin and I have been putting in longer Sunday rides; in fact, 3 of the 4 past rides have been 112 miles each, variations on Redwood City/Santa Cruz loops.

Normally today's story would have been about the unexpected (and very unwelcome!) head & cross-winds heading down the coast. Almost all the way to Davenport was quite a slog, and even the normally wind-protected run through the valleys on Gazos Creek found us in an adversarial position w/regards the wind. It's almost never the case you have a headwind going to Santa Cruz; last time I remember was many, many, MANY years ago, on a Western Wheeler's "workers ride" and suffered a pretty fierce headwind the entire way down to Santa Cruz. This wasn't as bad as that, but it did take a lot of the fun out of it, with Kevin wondering... why?

But everything got turned inside-out a bit when, two miles out of Santa Cruz, a rather large screw found its way into my rear tire, puncturing the tire, tube, and rim strip. Would have possibly wrecked the carbon rim too, except that somehow it happened to find it's way through the rimstrip exactly where the rim was drilled for a spoke. One stroke of good luck anyway! But how do you manage a field repair like that? In particular, the hole in the rim strip, which would have allowed the tube to puncture when air was put in? For the tire damage, that's easy, the usual dollar bill placed between the damaged part of the tire and the tube. But to prevent the tube from blowing down through the rimstrip was a bit tougher. But hey, this is America, the roadsides are littered with trash, and I found a discarded ketchup packet that could be wrapped around the entire tube, protecting it from the hole! I felt pretty good about that.

And felt even better when I remembered Epicenter Bike Shop was just a couple miles down the road, so we could pick up some spare tubes and a couple CO2 cartridges. What I wasn't thinking about was that the tubes in my pack have been there FOR YEARS and the first one I tried had a hole in it and lost air as quickly as it went in. Thus one CO2 cannister wasted. The second tube *seemed* OK.

After visiting Epicenter (a great shop, by the way), we headed got back to business, using a much nicer routing to Scotts Valley than before. Prettier, less convoluted, and with a real climb in the middle, not those annoying little things you can't get a rhythm on. Life was good. We skipped coffee, but picked up water, a Coke for Kevin, Mtn Dew for me, a pair of snickers bars (for Kevin) and Paydays (for me). The Coke and Mtn Dew were being saved for the top of Mtn Charlie, since it's a very long run from Scotts Valley to... well, there's noplacelse you can buy anything for the rest of the ride!

Kevin was feeling a lot better on Summit (which becomes Skyline) than he did a couple weeks ago. Maybe not as good as me; I get stronger as the ride goes on, opposite of Kevin, but he was doing well. And everything was going well, all the way to the fire station at Saratoga Gap, where I noticed my rear tire was really, really low. I inflated it back up with a CO2 cartridge, but by the time we got to the scenic overlook just north of Page Mill, it was almost flat again. So the second tube also had a hole, although obviously much smaller. Replaced it with one of the new tubes we'd picked up and all was good the rest of the ride.

Not sure what we'll be doing next week. We leave for France Thursday, July 9th, so we have two weeks left to get in shape. Maybe time to do a Santa Cruz loop using Soquel/San Jose road? Haven't done that in a long time!