

If I didn't have to be at work before 11am, would I give up on my own ride?



We've just finished descending Kings as the guys who used to ride with us are just starting up the hill.

It's been 40+ years now that I've been doing the regular every Tuesday/Thursday-morning ride up Kings; originally it just looped over to Sky Londa and back down 84, and then a bit later we added the West Old LaHonda loop. The "we" being myself and the most-regular regular at the time, Kevin (then-pilot) Keenan.

The ride peaked in terms of numbers showing up and speed back in the mid-1990s to 2005 or so, before I started spending more time with younger Kevin, working to get him into shape, and eventually seeing him become a regular on the ride. As "fast" times went from 24 minutes or so way back when to 28, we started losing some of the guys looking for a really tough workout, but it really wasn't much of a choice as I started gradually slowing down in my mid-50s. And now, at 67, it's been two years since I've seen something under 30 minutes on Kings, typically getting 33 on a "fast" day and 34-35 most others. And not taking it easy by any means; it's about all I've got in the tank.

Thankfully I do better after the first hour of the ride; once up on Skyline, I'm feeling OK and able to suck most wheels in front of me. Maybe I'm even less of a morning person than before?

But not everyone left the ride because I got slow. A number of guys, like Kevin K and maybe even John R... we see them as we're returning from our ride and they're starting theirs. They begin about an hour and a half later, nice being retired I guess, heading up the hill as we're returning to the flatter stuff. Past few days I've been looking at their climbing times and seeing 41 minutes up Kings and thinking, that sounds kind of nice! But for now I don't have that luxury; I have to try and keep the ride interesting for younger Kevin (don't think he'd appreciate having to wait another 6 minutes for me... 7 is bad enough, 13 would be ridiculous). And I have to keep trying to push myself so I can survive France, which is less than 4 weeks away now.

Hopefully I can ride myself into shape once in France. The longer distances should play to my strength, as well as the warmer temps. Will find out pretty soon.