

You don't know what you've got till it's gone, and then you still don't know

Power. Data. Just knowing where you are.

For the past 10 days, I've not had accurate power on my bike. The power meter on my right side went out, leaving just the left. My computer isn't smart enough to figure out that it's only getting power from just one side and doubling it, approximating (very closely) the total power I'm delivering to the pedals. But no, it shows only the one side. Instead of saying 190 watts, it shows 95. Can I figure it out in my head? Sure. But it also gets downloaded to Strava, to Garmin Connect, and a whole lot of training information, that tells me what shape I'm in, as estimate for VO2 max (which is **very** important to me, since it shows my relative shape today vs last week vs last year and a sense of where I'm heading tomorrow)... lots of things.

And those "lots of things" can't be manually reconfigured to account for the fact my power is being recorded at 50% of what it actually is.

You'd think this wouldn't be a big deal. You'd think I could just enjoy riding my bike, not knowing what power I'm producing, maybe using my heart rate to judge effort. But everything's connected; the goal is to deliver the most watts with the lowest heart rate... that's being efficient. And I can't see that. The goal is to see my VO2 max not decline, if possible. It had been at 46, and now, with the erroneous new data, it's down to 45. I started blood pressure meds a month ago and wanted to see what affect it was having... before the power went out, things were looking good! Now, I just don't know.

I should be able to have just as much fun without all the data. Heck there are people who say they finally found real joy in cycling when they ditched even a rudimentary bike computer. They don't even know how many miles they rode. That's OK, that's just not me. I really do enjoy pushing myself and looking at the data. This is a bit like the people who say, why are you so concerned about connectivity when you're on vacation? You don't need to use your phone to check up on things. Detach yourself and enjoy a world without distractions! Yeah, right. They don't get it. Some of us are more stressed when detached than when we're connected. Could we be retrained? Maybe. It would take a long time and probably not worth the effort for some of us. People are different. I don't judge the person who rides without a bike computer of any kind... well, not too much. If they want to laugh at me for my dependency on tech, great, what did that laugh, at my expense, really cost me? Nothing.

Fortunately, my experiment riding without power is about over. Speedplay sent me a new set of pedals so my ride home will feel familiar again.