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Yes, I rode this morning. My first semi-epic rain ride of the season, which tends to be a bit problematic in getting out the door, since last-minute changes to the stuff I got out the night before are inevitable as I look out the window and see rain and feel cold radiating a foot away from the glass. Yes, this is going to be challenging.

I'm rigid about this ride starting on time, but this morning that just wasn't going to happen, or at least the part of the ride that includes me. I've got a new pair of waterproof Gore gloves that are beyond-challenging to get on. How do people do it? Lined gloves just don't like my fingers. I can usually get three into place, four maybe, but the small finger on my right hand just wasn't cooperative, especially when the other hand required to help already had a glove on it. So back into the house I go, asking for help from my wife and not dealing very well with my frustration as I watch a few precious minutes go by. Eventually I'm out on the road, and arrive three minutes late to the start, where... nobody is waiting.

Nobody. Now, it could be that they left on time, as they're supposed to do, and maybe I can try and catch up if they head up through the park while I take the normal road up. Or, it could be that nobody else showed up. I looked for tire tracks in the pavement but found none, although it was raining hard enough that it's unlikely they would have remained for more than a minute. Oh, did I tell you it was raining?

This was not a fast ride up the hill. A combination of a high-gravity day and feeling like I was fighting off the beginning of a cold (and what better way to fight off a cold than with a ride in the cold?) made me sluggish, very sluggish, clocking about 34 minutes to the top. Yes, it was raining, but at this point, not so hard that it was really interesting. I've had rides up the hill where the rain was coming down so hard you couldn't hear yourself think. This wasn't that ride. Yet. But there were some signs of interesting stuff to come, as I'd pass small clumps of snow here & there.

The wind? Yes, it was howling above, but eerily calm on the roads below. The run south on Skyline was a bit lonely with no wheels to follow, and starting to get more than a little bit cold now that I wasn't doing a hard climb. It got interesting right at Skeggs Point though, when the road was suddenly covered with a light layer of snow and a bit of ice here and there. OK, game on. Brrrr. This was not fun. It could have been fun, if not for the fact that it was probably in the mid-30s and raining. At this point I decided to skip the west-side Old LaHonda loop and just head straight down 84, not enjoying the 7 mile descent with no chance to warm up, but really looking forward to the flat and rolling sections below. It felt really good being able to put some power to the pedals again for that final few miles to home! And when I got back, there was a message from Kevin (the pilot), asking "How was it?" on my phone.

The best thing about this ride? Probably the fact that the rain didn't let up later on, so it wasn't one of those all-too-often times when, if you'd just left a little bit later, it would have been much nicer. Instead, it's a ride that I do so you don't have to. Not quite sure how that works, but really, I ride in the cold & much so you can ride when it's nice out.