

## Watt did you say? First ride with a power meter- very cool, could make you faster!



My Stages Power Meter arrives for my bike!

We've been a Stages Power Meter dealer for a while, selling them to a small number of customers. I think that's going to change. The "small number" I mean. I did my first real ride with one today, the "Coastal Classic" Pescadero Tunitas loop, and there is no doubt it made me faster.

First things first. It was an authentic, "clean" test of power measurement, because I was riding solo. Kevin had another bad day (the kidney issues which may or may not actually be kidney issues; they've never really figured it out) and it was 2:15 pm by the time I finally got out the door. Part of me was thinking maybe I should do something shorter, but once I got out there, it was the same mindset as always. Stick to the plan.

Old LaHonda was interesting; I didn't feel all that great, especially for the lower part, but the power meter proved its worth, with a new PR ("new" being relative; new as far as Strava goes, which means the past 5 years). 21:09. A far cry from the 15-somethings I used to do back in the day, but fortunately Strava doesn't go back that far.

How did the power meter help? It's simple, really. It allowed me to find the right gear. I stopped focusing on speed and just watched the power reading, and noted which gear gave me a higher reading with the same perceived effort, "perceived" meaning same level of pain/discomfort. The result was surprising; in almost every situation, going to a lower gear increased the power I could lay down.



Stage Road still has quite a bit of gravel on this section

No stop at Pescadero for food, since I was racing the sun, but I did stop to take a few photos at the duck pond in LaHonda, along with an unscheduled stop shortly thereafter when I had a chain issue up front. Something to do with a severely-worn front chainring, which I would have replaced some time ago but since the plans are for a new bike in my future, I've let it go. I'm thinking it's time to revisit that, even though the DuraAce chainrings run about \$260. It has lasted about 30,000 miles though...

Stage Road between Pescadero and San Gregorio is still not fun to ride, with quite a bit of gravel remaining on the "repaired" section, and a road surface that's a whole lot worse (for bikes) than it was before. Quite a bit of a headwind heading north, so I was developing power, but not much speed. At least, with a power meter, you get some degree of credit for those nasty rides into the

wind!

Tunitas was not easy; I was hoping for a tailwind, but none available, and truth be told my legs were beginning to wear out a bit from the previous efforts (basically, trying to impress my power meter). I ended up with 48-something, a good 3 minutes slower than just a couple weeks ago. Still put in a pretty strong effort on the upper stretches, again checking to see which gear would develop more power. But in the end a bit disappointing on the flatter section, as it sure felt faster than my time for that part indicated.