

Watch for the gravel on coast-side roads!



"No exit" was the theme of today's ride. On Tunitas, turn left, "Bikes not advised." Turn right, "Bikes not advised." Is there a not-so-subtle message they're sending us? And on Stage Road, if you were heading South from San Gregorio, there's no warning about the gravel until you get to the top of the final climb, where it tells you "Bikes not advised." Where are you going to go? I paid for the Las Vegas trip today. No, not gambling debts; I didn't even put a quarter in a machine. Couldn't. None of the machines take coins anymore, and I did have three quarters I wanted to get rid of. But I missed both Tuesday & Thursday's rides, I ate too much bad food, and today was... tough.

It was the regular Coastal Classic, you know the drill, up Old LaHonda, down the other side, over Haskins to Pescadero, Coke and a pasty at the bakery, Stage Road north, and return via Tunitas. I could have deliberately taken it easy, but no, that doesn't work for me, I had to ride it hard despite that it wasn't very fast. I even thought I was doing pretty well up Haskins until I discovered it takes a lot longer to cover the last stretch than I thought. At least it did today! Maybe it hurt a bit more because I was on my own, nobody to draft or motivate me to go just a bit harder up the climbs (my son is goofing off in Disneyland with his sister)(which he'll pay for on Thursday's ride).

About that gravel. The stuff they use when they chipseal roads is not good for your bike! It's exactly the right size to get kicked up into your drivetrain, and although it rarely happens, it can cause your chain to jam in the rear derailleur and actually break not just the derailleur but your frame and even the rear wheel. It's not pretty. Thankfully my bike came out fine, as most do, but maybe it's 1 time out 1000 that something does, and you don't want to be that 1.

Stage Road didn't seem as bad as the lower section of Tunitas. The only good thing about it is that I could quickly write off any sort of Strava time for the climb (and in fact I even stopped at a few places to take picture, like the one above). They do have warning signs for bikes, but they come too late and, in the case of the intersection in the photo, you could go either way and find gravel. Go back and you face gravel. Hopefully it will be gone soon!

It took quite a while but eventually I did catch up to a couple people on Tunitas, the last of whom decided to latch onto my wheel and see if he could do a bit better than normal for the climb. I made no attempt to drop him (not that I could have...) and he did do better than any prior time on Tunitas. Hey, if I can't go faster myself today, at least I helped somebody else!