

## Is there a Strava Tunitas segment handicapped for snakes?

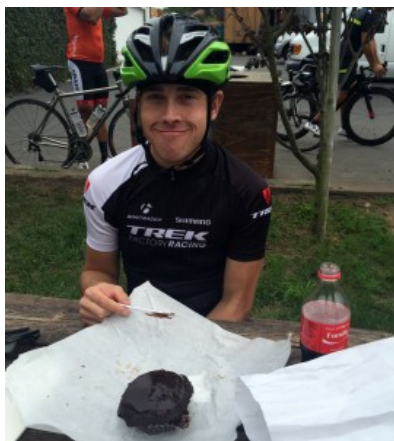


Stopping to rescue snake on Tunitas, stopped earlier to view LaHonda duck pond birds. We may ride hard, but there's always time to enjoy the surroundings!

This was an unusual ride. Not unusual for its route; how many times have we done the Coastal Classic (Woodside/Pescadero/Tunitas)? Too many to count. What made it unusual was that it was me feeling better on all three climbs, having to hold back a bit for Kevin. That hasn't happened in ages. Could have something to do with goofing off with his sister in Disneyland last week? And the stars lining up in just the right way so I had that feeling I could push hard on the pedals and... just keep on pushing hard? One of those rare days where it didn't seem my lungs were the limiting factor they normally are? Yes, all of the above.

I do wish I'd pushed a bit more towards the top of LaHonda, instead of trying to keep Kevin in sight behind me. Strava tells me my time was just a second out of my top-10 for the past 5 years, and I think I could have made top-5.

Of course we dropped by the duck pond in LaHonda; you can see the large bird in the right-side photo at the top of this page that was hanging out. No turtles, many ducks & ducklings, and yes, that pond is losing water pretty quickly now. I'm not looking forward to rain, from a cycling standpoint, but yes, we need it. If only for the ducks.



The bakery was out of face-sized cookies so a very decadent chocolate muffin had to do. Muffin sounds healthier than cupcake, right?

Of course a mandatory stop at the Pescadero Bakery, where the sandwich people at the back of the store know Kevin by sight and get his order going for him. Kind of like the bar in Cheers, where everybody knows your name, but much healthier. Probably not so healthy was the chocolate muffin we had afterward.

Stage Road's gravel is beginning to lessen but still something to be careful of. Definitely slows you down a bit on the climb, so this wouldn't be a good time to go for a Strava PR. Same thing for the lower stretches of Tunitas. Wish I understood the point of laying gravel down on the road without any oil to bind it to the asphalt. Not that I'd want to ride on a freshly-oiled road, but at least I'd

understand why it was being done (the idea being that the gravel adds a new layer to the roadway, bedding itself into the asphalt with the oil as a kind of glue).

It was just a short distance from the coast (on Tunitas) that we spotted a snake in need of help in the middle of the road. Small guy, still alive, small puncture mark from where it had been dropped by a bird. We moved it off the road and hopefully it will survive. Snakes don't deserve to be run over by cars or bikes. So yes, we always stop for snakes. Even those with rattles. Just more careful with the rattlers.

I wasn't sure how Kevin was going to be on Tunitas; the only thing I can rely on is that his pace will be uneven. On a long climb, that can really cause me problems; I do much better at a steady pace. Fortunately, my power meter was helpful as I realized that, over time, Kevin averaged about 275 watts; anything above that and I could pull away from him. Worked great, just watched my power and didn't worry about him speeding up or slowing down, as long as I could stay within a range of 275 to 300 watts (which I can), I'd be OK. In the end, I could have done better and had a very good time across the steeper middle section of Tunitas, but when I'm riding with someone, I don't look for ways to drop them. Most of the time. Not today anyway. Kevin, on the other hand, if he's got a chance to drop me, it's bye-bye Dad, see you at the top.

In the end it was yet another nice ride to the coast & back. Without question we live in a wonderful place to ride! --Mike--