

AWESOME first ride in legit cold weather!

Not sure what made this morning's ride so great. It's not as if I was at the front heading up Kings (I wasn't; Marcus, Kevin, Kevin & George in front of me, JR with me). But it felt good, much better than I thought 30-degree air would make me feel.

I'd laid out all the cold-weather gear the night before; Bontrager RXL winter gloves, heavy duty base layer, long-sleeve winter jersey, booties. I was ready. Pre-made frozen bottles of Skratch (energy drink) put with bikes so they'd thaw overnight.

Everything just seemed good after getting on the bikes and riding away from the house. Mid-30s on the way to the start in Woodside, mid-30s climbing Kings, low-30s (actually, 30.0) on Skyline. And that wind? Made for beautiful clear skies with views to die for, and I'd wisely brought my camera. Which it turned out didn't have a memory card in it. Doh!

Biggest disappointment was seeing the temp drop to exactly 30.0 degrees. Really was hoping to see 29.9! Sounds a lot more impressive. Other disappointment was that nobody came to the front to help me chase down a relatively-slow truck descending the west side of 84. I really wanted that truck, but I wasn't gaining on it fast enough to catch it before I'd die trying. I'd pull over once or twice to see if anyone else would come through, and sure, Kevin (pilot) would take a pull, but not at the speed we needed, so I'd take over again.

Clearly, this was a ride where I was feeling better by the mile. On West Old LaHonda Marcus started pulling away, and I glued myself to his wheel. The rest of the guys were content to hang back and take it easy, all but Kevin (not the pilot), who was trying to bridge up to us. Trying, but couldn't get there.

It's not as if Marcus was riding hard; he could drop me on a climb in a flash with very little effort. But it was harder than anyone else wanted to ride (aside from myself and Kevin). And I had just enough in reserve to contest the final uphill sprint to Skyline.

It still amazes me that I can be so comfortable on such a cold day, and even look forward to it. And it amazes me that, at 58, I can still be amazed by riding a bike. It's pretty awesome. --Mike Jacoubowsky