

Mt Hamilton- always an awesome start to the year!



I was thinking it would be a very, very long time before I felt like I was in shape for a long ride. Just riding a lot of miles isn't so tough, but riding it the way I want to ride it, that's the hard part. I want to look forward to a big climb. I want to feel like I can sprint if challenged. I don't want to be the last guy up the hill, no matter how good everyone else is. But taking three weeks off the bike (two in November, one in December, for business and vacation travel) had taken its toll.



The endless stoplights heading through downtown San Jose

Thankfully, the last couple of weeks have had me feeling better, and I think it all led up to a really great time today on Mount Hamilton. This is a ride I've done every single year on New Year's Day, pretty much no-matter-what. Today it was Kevin, Alec (from the shop) and Todd joining me. And yes, it was pretty cool in the morning; 36 degrees when Kevin and I rode to the train station in Redwood City. Warmed up to a balmy 42 or so getting off in San Jose!

Todd and Alec met up with us at the base of Mount Hamilton, which takes about half an hour of riding through a sea of stop lights to get there. Without the stop lights, it might literally be 10 minutes faster. But, it's a good warm-up to the main event.



Alec is pretty new to road bikes, and doesn't climb quite as fast as the rest of us. But he's not slow either; you can't ride up Mt Ham in 1 hour, 50 minutes if you don't have something in your legs. Eventually Kevin and Todd rode on up ahead a bit with Alec and I arriving at the top a few minutes later.

The usual nice views up on top, although not as spectacular as there must have been a couple days ago when it was windy. Mid-40s so you definitely wanted to stay in the sun, but not so cold that you couldn't dress well for it and be pretty darned comfortable (we were).

The descent was interesting; Alec more than makes up for his climbing with his descending. Todd took the lead, but Alec clearly enjoys descending, and is pretty good at it.

At the bottom Alec and Todd got their bikes loaded up in their cars while Kevin and I headed off to catch the train home. I'd miscalculated a bit, thinking it would take longer to get to the train station than it did, but that gave us time to find a place to buy lunch before heading back.

57 miles, 5700ft of climbing. If we'd driven to the start it would have been only 38 miles. Somehow 57 feels like a more legit ride. --MikeJ



Kevin giving a thumbs-up halfway up the climb



Always bring crisp dollar bills for the coke machine!

