

A Big Day in 5 Parts



There are times when it's easy to relate to the picture at the right, showing the infamous "broom wagon" that follows major bike races, the last vehicle in the entourage, whose job is to make sure there are no stragglers and to pick up those who have lost hope. Those days you wonder why you're out there; the climb seems to be winning out over your efforts to get to the top. Your memory becomes your worst enemy, as you start to think about days in the past when it wasn't so tough, it was even fun, you were beating everyone else. But not today. Today you find yourself wishing for that broom wagon to come along and put you out of your misery.

I would love to tell you I've never had days like that, but that would not only be a lie but it would also reinforce the ridiculous notion that life should be without struggle, that life should be about, as Calvin (of Calvin & Hobbes) would say, jumping from peak to peak, each day better than the day before.

I wish!

We have a choice. We can embrace the broom wagon as a way out, or we can do everything possible to keep it at bay. I prefer the later, and I motivate myself, on those days where climbing Kings seems to be an exercise in futility, by remembering that Kings is just one hill, early in a ride, and things will get better.

Today was one of those days things got better. It was just myself and Kevin this morning; everyone else was heading directly to the Tour of California. I wasn't doing that badly, but not that great either. Cold mornings (down to 37 at one point) don't bring out the best in me. But once we started descending towards West Old LaHonda it began to warm up a bit, and things just got better and better.

But that was just the first part of the day. Instead of spending the day at the shop, today I took the train to San Jose and rode another 22 miles (some of them quite hilly) to the Tour of California's stage finish. Two guys in Stanford kit were heading the same way and tagged along with me, thinking I knew where I was going (which was true, since I'd programmed a course into my Garmin). Those 22 miles were a lot tougher than expected, especially a couple of steep climbs (which, carrying camera gear, you really feel), but perhaps not as tough as the 12 miles battling a headwind back into San Jose to catch the train home. Funny thing though; headwinds don't cause me as much grief as they used to. 18, 19, 20mph... sure, it would be easier to go slower, but it makes sense to go faster and get through it more-quickly.

And the train ride back was interesting too! The conductor turned out to be a big fan of our website and my writings, and had some good conversations with quite a few other cyclists on the train.

The toughest part of the day? Probably the 3 miles home at the end. Might have had something to do with not having any food since breakfast? No matter, running on empty, you just put one foot down, then the other, and climb the hill back home. By the end of the day it was something over 70 miles, with some quality climbing and quality headwinds!



Kevin on West Old LaHonda



A deer in our path on West Old LaHonda



37.6 degrees on Skyline. When’s it going to warm up?