

Ringer shows up on can't-miss bike

We've got our regulars, and we've got our irregulars. On a good day, everyone's nice & civil and talkative. On a bad day, the fastest of the irregulars take on the fastest of the regulars, and, as the song says, I'm "Dust in the Wind."

Yesterday we had our regulars... me, younger Kevin, Eric. MIA were Karl, Karen, and older Kevin (pilot). Semi-regular Marcus showed up, adding the potential for speed. Now, so far, we didn't yet have that critical mass required for a testosterone-fueled ride up Kings. Until. Until TGOTBOB shows up. The Guy On the Bright Orange Bike. That would be JeffZ, one of the fastest 50 year olds anywhere, on his new amazingly-visible Trek Madone. Our "ringer" who rarely shows up for our ride, having already done 50+ miles by the time we start (he's one of those "morning people" who does the uber-fast 6:15am ride out of Palo Alto).

I watched everyone ride off into the sunset pretty quickly, holding the pace only up to the first hairpin, where it crosses the creek. Younger Kevin, seeing that I was in distress (I really wasn't in distress, just slow) held up at the park entrance for me, where I told him not to wait, I'm good, get back up there and try to catch Marcus and JeffZ. He's young; I figured maybe, even after waiting 30 seconds for me, he'd have a chance. Not quite. He last saw them at the long open section but couldn't make time on them. Not surprising, really; Kevin, fast as he is, doesn't have that many base miles so he's a bit of a fast-burning candle right now.

Me? I eventually caught up to Eric just before the top. I figured that would happen, since by the time we see Eric, he's already ridden up Kings once. If I were on my second lap up Kings, I'd be finishing a day and a half behind.

Beautiful morning; we got the ride in before the heavy smoke settled in. One of those rides where I really did feel better as it went.
--MikeJ