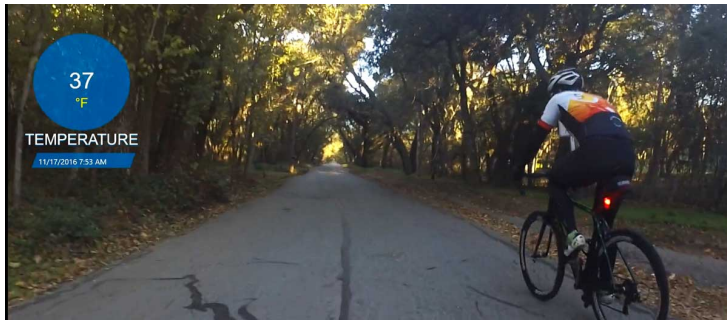


## Winter is coming? 37 degrees this morning; I think it's already here!



I'd heard last night there might be frost for this morning's ride; thankfully, that wasn't the case. It was our coldest ride in a very, very long time though!

Showing up this morning were both Kevins, and a face we haven't seen in probably a decade or longer, Lanier. He's usually out on the road honing his time trial skills (I stalk, or I mean follow him, on Strava) so it was a bit of a surprise seeing him show up for our hill-fest, but he said to expect to see him quite a bit this winter. Not showing up were regulars Eric and JR, possibly thinking why ride when it's so cold in the morning if you can head out a bit later in the day. If that was an option for them, hey, I get it.

It really wasn't that bad though. It's very easy to dress for 37 degrees; it's when it's 4 or 5 degrees colder that you really feel it. Standard weight long-fingered gloves, base layer, normal jersey, leg warmers & toe warmers. It did warm up as we climbed Kings; a high of 43 halfway up (coincidentally, right where I blew a gasket and the other three road away from me), then cooling back down to a steady 39 all the way across the top of Skyline. Roads were dry so no issues with traction on the descents.

One thing I miss with Karl gone (he usually takes time off for cyclocross training in the winter) is the lack of speed on Skyline and descending 84. I do what I can, but that's not much; I'm pretty winded by the time I get to the top, and the opportunity to be lazy and suck a wheel for a few miles can be pretty appealing. What usually happens is that Kevin (pilot) goes into "diesel" mode and pulls us along, but he pulls at the sort of pace that could be managed for 40 or 50 miles. Probably because he often does a swim workout prior to our ride. I will, and do, push the pace heading west on 84 to West Old LaHonda though. Partly to reduce the amount of time we're on a road where cars seem to have a tough time passing us, and partly because it's a good way to keep warm. I've been trying to convince the other Kevin (kid, although is "kid" really appropriate for someone who will be 24 next week?) to push it a bit on those sections, but I think he likes to keep something in reserve so he can blow everyone away on the upper stretch of West Old LaHonda.

So three good rides under my belt since coming back from Cambodia; interesting to think that, right now, 11:33pm Thursday night... one week ago I was exactly halfway through a 13 hour flight back from Singapore. On the one hand, I like the "feel and taste" of the air much better here. On the other, upper-80s with high humidity is easier on my lungs and skin. But ultimately the decision goes to the Bay Area because the area around Siem Reap (Angkor Wat, Cambodia) is dead flat. I gotta have hills to climb. Figuratively and literally.