

## First Santa Cruz loop in 2.5 years? It was definitely time to get that monkey off my back!



Kevin, Burrito & Coke at the Davenport Cafe. Life is good!

I'm not sure how it happened; it was just one of those casual things last week, either me or Kevin saying maybe we should do Santa Cruz today. And we agreed, sure, because it was real easy to say that at the time, since saying it was a bit disconnected from actually doing it.

Back in the day, a whole whopping 3-4 years ago, Kevin and I would do quite a few Santa Cruz loops (110+ miles) each year. Not quite as common as our regular Sunday ride to Pescadero, returning via Tunitas, but still a pretty regular ride. And then, 2015 became the year of my decline. In retrospect, I think I gave in too easily. I was focusing too much on my breathing issues and not enough on simply pushing myself hard. I went from doing maybe 8 100+ mile rides/year to just one, the Sequoia Century.

That long drought ended today. Thankfully, today was a lot nicer than yesterday; hottest it got was 91 degrees (climbing out of Boulder Creek towards Skyline) and it was mid-60s along the coast. Had we ridden a day earlier, it had been 105 degrees... in Davenport! Yikes. That would not have been fun. Today was warm enough.

No records broken, but it was good to be pushing the limits a bit again. I'll have to admit that Kevin was stronger, pretty much throughout the ride, than I was, but that's OK, he's on a bit of a comeback himself.

High points?

- Definitely the Davenport Café, and it's terrific burritos. The next-door Whaler Café is great for pastries, but the oft-overlooked Davenport Café is, in our opinion, the place for food. Plus it's never crowded.
- Tailwinds on the coast! Either that or we were just feeling great. :-)
- 16.5mph average moving speed. This surprised me a bit; I thought we were riding more "casually" than that.
- Just doing it again, feeling like we're back in the groove!

Low points?

- The stretch of highway 9 from Santa Cruz to Boulder Creek, which seems far longer than it's actual 12 miles. Narrow road, bumpy pavement and lots of traffic.
- Having my heart monitor battery die, so I wasn't able to get a handle on my pace climbing 9 (plus my Strava "suffer score" doesn't calculate correctly!).
- Climbing temps as we headed up to Skyline were another, causing concern I might run out of water.

- And finally, Mr. Mustard had packed up and left before we got to the top!!!