

The very thin line between "just a day" and "A great day"



The typical December "Coast is Clear and 74 degree" photo. Amazing how few out on the coast today, where it was at least 10 degrees warmer than inland.

Today could have turned out very different. I woke up earlier than I wanted to, one of those things that happens from time to time, apparently a weird effect of my meds. I got something to eat, coffee, and figured what the heck, I'll pass the time until Kevin gets up by watching the morning interview shows. Quickly came to the realization that every network was rehearsing the same stories, using the same people found on the normal evening news shows, saying the same things. No breaking news, no exclusive interviews. No wonder people watch Football.

I was getting into a comfortable stalling pattern. Kevin eventually woke up, nasty cold nastier; no way was he going to ride. 9am becomes 10, 10 becomes 10:30, and you start thinking maybe you'll do a shorter ride than planned by the time you finally get out. That plan thing- it's Sunday so Pescadero/Tunitas. I'm finally on the bike at 11:15 and basically going through the motions, making the turn onto Old LaHonda knowing it's not going to be pretty. It wasn't. Barely under 25 minutes and passed by several on the way up. I'm thinking, about half-way up, that this isn't going to be a fun ride.

And then you hit... the other side. Everything changes on the other side. You admire the views on West Old LaHonda, keep heading west, and detour to the duck pond which is really pretty today. Stop to take a few pictures then head towards Pescadero Road. At this point there remains the option of heading back via West Alpine to shorten the mileage a bit, but no, at this point might as well stick with the plan. And besides, I was feeling better as I went.

I managed, with great effort, to catch up to someone further up Haskins, and then charged down the other side. My legs were moving better than expected, even able to attack that awful rolling section just before things flatten out ahead of Pescadero. I very quickly refueled (Mtn Dew; no cookie or sandwich) and headed out Stage Road on a very rare nearly-windless day.



The group of women heading up Tunitas

The coast, as you can see, was beautiful. And warm. On the bay side, I needed a base layer and leg warmers. On the coast, I was overdressed. Not a big deal since I knew it was going to cool down on the way up Tunitas. I didn't get much chance to cool down though, as I spotted a group of cyclists ahead of me just before entering the forest. Same group of cyclists I saw leaving Pescadero

just as I entered in fact. 5 women riding strongly and kind of team-like. I decided best to pass them before the climb because I didn't want them to hear my heavy breathing behind them, but this meant riding up the hill wondering if I'd be able to stay ahead of them. It was that sort of thing where you'd look back and you'd see them or or two corners down, until about halfway up one of them broke free and it just wasn't very likely I'd be able to maintain the gap. She got to me just before the grassy knoll (where it flattens out), at the same time I caught up with a guy who'd been taking it easy on the steep part so he could rip on the flatter section.

I was dumb and stayed on the guy's wheel, while she dropped back to check on her friends. My wheels came off (meaning I couldn't keep following) right at Star Hill, which coincided with him easing off, so one of those things where, a minute after him dropping me, I was back on his wheel. We finished together to the top (actually, he dropped off my wheel just before the end but I wasn't about to finish ahead of him after sucking his wheel for so long).

So it turned out to be a great ride, decent average power, met nice people along the way. A ride that almost didn't happen.