

PRs may be harder to get, but not impossible!



Heading up Pescadero Road towards Haskins, near the start of a lengthy Strava segment, one that we actually scored a personal best with today! Strava says I've ridden the segment from Pescadero to the start of the Haskins climb 39 times since 2008. In the opposite direction, it's likely many times that; truthfully, climbing Haskins from the coast side isn't all that much fun. But that's what we did today, and, using favorable conditions (not too hot and slight tailwind) Kevin and I set a new PR for that section, beating my 2013 time by 3 seconds. Not much, but as you ride the same roads over and over and over, and you get older and older and older, it gets tougher and tougher and tougher to get new personal records!

It was the "Reverse Pescadero with West Alpine" route today, about 67 miles, 6158ft of climbing, 15.8mph and 203 weighted average watts. I'm OK with that. Kevin's average watts will have been much, much higher, since he did a dramatic pull from LaHonda all the way to San Gregorio, into the wind. How much difference does drafting make? Kevin averaged 251 watts for the section, vs my 166. Anyone thinking drafting doesn't make a huge difference doesn't know how to draft! Trust me, as I've gotten older, I've become very, very good at drafting. :-)

I also *finally* got over the 1000 VAM mark (vertical meters of climbing/hour) on Old LaHonda. 1003, to be exact.

Overall, Kevin's weighted average power of 218 watts for the ride isn't that much higher than my 203 though, so clearly I was doing my best to pull my weight the rest of the way. Kevin did get to unleash his legs on West Alpine; all I could do was watch him ride away and hope he was having fun. Unfortunately I did catch up to him about 3/4 of the way up, where he'd had to stop for a brief seizure. I wasn't having much fun on West Alpine, dealing with some really extensive sweating, totally soaking my headband messing up my glasses enough that I had to remove them for the upper part of the climb. It wasn't that hot at the time (59 degrees) so even with leg warmers and a base layer, I shouldn't have been sweating quite so much. Obviously, I need to ride faster, more often!

There is some evidence the new breathing meds are working; it's not as if my times are rapidly decreasing, but I'm not gasping for air nearly so much and can even talk a bit on a climb, something I haven't been able to do in ages. I'm thinking I just have to retrain myself to breathe like a normal person does.

Apart from the sweating issue (accompanied by a bit of drop in power) on the upper parts of West Alpine, there was a feeling that things are improving. At least, once I got past the idea that there was absolutely no possible way for me to take a pull as Kevin charged towards San Gregorio! Very, very impressive ride by Kevin on that section. --Mike--