

Traded one Kevin for another



Classic Stage Road scene that hasn't changed much in the 46 years I've ridden it. Kevin (kid) was on his way to Disneyland with his sister, which usually means doing a solo ride. And the solo ride I usually do isn't terribly fun, heading south through the foothills, up Redwood Gulch to 9 and back via Skyline. Who'd want to do that? So I sent a text to the other Kevin (pilot) and sure enough, he was available for the "usual"- Old LaHonda/Pescadero/Tunitas.

I was looking forward to concluding this week as a completely "normal" one, which means commuting by bike 5 days to work, the full Tuesday/Thursday-morning ride including West Old LaHonda loop, and at least 55 miles today. It's been since the beginning of November that I've met that definition of "normal." Weather, a vacation, and The Plague (a two-week hacking cough) had all gotten in the way. But I was determined that this week was going to see things swing back to the regular routine. And finally, things fell into place.

And what a nice day to ride! Sure, it started a bit on the cool side, just below 50 degrees until we hit Skyline. Just over 24 minutes on the climb (faster than my prior 4 times), slower than usual on Haskins (because "Pilot" Kevin doesn't hit it hard like the other Kevin, and I was fine with that), best time on the first Stage Road climb since September, same thing on the second climb, and best time since mid-October for the final climb.

But of course, before hitting Stage Road came the food & drink stop at Pescadero! This was the express train version, just a quick stop for a cookie and Mtn. Dew. The pilot had to run down to the corner gas station though, because there was no Diet Coke to be had at Arcangeli's Market. The horror. I learned long ago that Diet Coke people accept no substitutes. Ever. Me, I'll take Coke, Pepsi, Mtn Dew or Coffee. I'll even drink Gatorade if I have to. And a cookie. Not sandwich today, as this was the express train.

Our pace out of Pescadero would probably have been a bit easier if not for coming across another group of cyclists, just before the first climb started. That likely also explains why the descent off the first climb was a PR, as we were trying to keep our distance from those who were now chasing us. Because, as always, the most important rule in cycling is to never pass someone that you can't stay ahead of.

Tunitas. Well, the good news is that we didn't have a tail wind, so our times were shot before we got to the base of the climb. We were riding at a pace where I could carry on a conversation, so nothing to write home about.

Overall the ride met "normal" expectations for performance at this time of year, which represents a dramatic improvement over the past few weeks.