

Sometimes you don't know until you're pushed to the limit



When JeffZ is flying, he looks like he's flying. Even with my invisible tow rope attached. I wasn't sure how this morning was going to go, other than knowing it had to, just had to, go better than Tuesday's ride. The "Nadir Nadir Nadir" ride which I hoped would represent the bottom, and from there, I could only go up. But it wasn't a good sign that nobody else showed up at the start, just me and whatever mood I brought with me. But it had to go better than Tuesday.

Since it's Thursday, it's up through the Park, a good opportunity to see, pretty darned quickly, how I was doing. Turning right onto Greer, I took notice of the easy upward grade. Easy if you weren't trying to ride a bit harder than normal, that is. Relief when you crest the top then start the gradual downhill to the Greer entrance to Huddart. You might even get some speed if you didn't have to be concerned about all the potholes; interesting the pavement is so nice on the rise, so bad on the slope down.

Turning into the park you wonder how it's going to feel, that first pitch up before the bridge, and then the switchback, the split around the tree and finally it eases off for a bit, but if you're going for time, you have to keep up the power, which sucks for me because you hit the nasty short steep stretch, well over 10% grade, already running a bit of an oxygen deficit. I can carry 400 watts up that, holding it for the 20 or so seconds required, and then... I'm dead. Where it flattens out, where the bunnies are sometimes seen on the left side of the road, I'm gasping, trying to catch my breath. So I can start it all over again, as it pitches up through the internal part gate, turning left towards the fee station, and then the long, straight-ish pitch over a terrible road surface to meet up with Kings. And through it all I held a decent pace, way better than Tuesday. Better than most days.

And. Then. I. Died. There was no chance of pushing a good pace up Kings. Just nothing really left. Maybe I could have forced it, but let myself believe that wasn't possible, which, it turns out, was a good thing.

Because, up on Skyline, JeffZ pulls up from behind. Said he gave me a 10 minute head start, pulled a solid 25 up Kings, and I'm thinking, can I hold this wheel? Can I possibly hold this wheel? You gotta try. It's always easier to hold a wheel than try to catch back up to it, and JeffZ rides a pretty steady pace. And somehow I held that wheel, even up West Old LaHonda, getting my best time for that segment in a few years. JeffZ was going to continue north on Skyline to Kings and I briefly thought of joining him, but quickly realized the 2 mile uphill slog was more to his liking than mine, and I didn't want to hold him up.

It felt really good, getting pushed like that. Appreciate that he didn't try to show how strong he was and leave me dying out there. :-)