

Did not ride in the rain... 2 hours on a trainer... learned a lot!



Still waiting for a new battery for the rain bike (brought my old Di2 external battery down to the shop a while back to check if someone else's bike had a battery problem or something else, and haven't seen it since), and need to replace the brakes too so it's rain-worthy. Could have ridden Kevin's ebike in the rain, but maybe this would be a good excuse to...

...dig out Kevin's rarely-used Tacx smart trainer (similar but not quite as nice as the Wahoo Kickr we sell at the shop), get Zwift going and ride indoors.

Not so easy a task as it should have been! Had to remember how to get things hooked up; my desktop computer doesn't have a bluetooth dongle so couldn't run Zwift from the desktop. Had to hook it up through a laptop, which doesn't have anywhere near the resolution the large-screen TV is capable of, but still, good enough to suffer, right? Then had to get the heart rate and power sensors, figure out if the Garmin actually mattered (it doesn't; in the end, you upload to Strava through Zwift, not your Garmin, because the Garmin won't be giving you accurate information).

Finally got things set up, and chose the "3 sisters" Watopia course because it has almost exactly the same amount of distance and climbing as the Tuesday/Thursday morning ride.

And off I go! What could possibly go wrong? Well, a few minor things, remedied without having to stop en-route because my wife was home. First, I had an underpowered fan engaged. Second, I forgot my water bottle. Actually, I discovered I go through a lot more water on Zwift than in real life.

So Zwift is definitely great for exposing my weaknesses. I would love to believe that the much-lower power readings were either in error, or that I just couldn't get motivated on a trainer. The reality is that you can't stand for any extended periods of time on a trainer, like I can in real life, and staying in the saddle, there's a real limit on how well my lungs work. I did not realize that standing up made such a difference in "breathability." I'd thought that standing was a way of becoming marginally more efficient in oxygen use, but that's absolutely not the case. How do I know? Because my wattage would go way up when I'd sit up. As in, let go of the handlebars and sit straight up. Which you can't do for an extended amount of time in the real world (riding no hands isn't terribly safe most of the time).

So I'm learning things. On the trainer, sitting straight-up = more power. But you can't stay in that position very long without getting a pretty sore tail end. In the real world, standing up = more power, but because I can breathe better that way, not for any other reason.

In the end, it was a two hour ride, just like normal Tuesday/Thursday mornings. But at the end I was totally spent and almost a bit wobbly, probably because there was no real cool-down (although at least the finishing part of the ride was flat, after a 3 mile descent). I would have liked to have drafted other riders, but my inability to hold to higher wattage for any length of time meant that I'd have to limit how I rode, and not sit up from time to time to deliver more power until my tail end got too sore.

I also gained a real appreciation for how comfortable the "normal" position is on a road bike. Just can't breathe well in that position. Maybe now I have a reason why I dislike trainers so much? If they were built to feel normal when standing, it might be a whole different thing. As it is, I'm leaving a good 30 watts on the table, but feeling like I actually worked 20 watts harder. That sucks.