

## Is it by choice that I suck?

I am so glad I decided I was riding this morning, no matter what time I got in from my flight last night. It was tight; I really don't want to get to bed too much later than midnight when I'm getting up at 7am, and I arrived home at 11:50pm.



Regrouping before heading down west-side 84

What a nice morning it was. The sun was showing itself to others, not me, but it wasn't as cold as it felt like it was going to be when I was shivering on a steel bench at the Millbrae train station at 11pm last night. 42 degrees was the coldest I saw, and most of the time it was a balmy 44. I was a bit concerned when I pulled up at the start and was the only one there, but soon I saw Kevin coming down Canada Road, and then Ludo, and John, and Todd (very uncharacteristically for Todd, he was a minute and a half late) and Terry, one of our summer employees who was back from school and wanted to see what pain on a road bike was all about. Eventually we picked up Eric, Chris and Marcos along the way, so we had a pretty good group going.

I had some fear of feeling old & fat, but interestingly, felt neither. Pushing a fairly tall gear up the hill I was able to keep my breathing relatively reasonable, and hung with the faster guys up to the park, where we pulled off and waited a bit before heading on. At the wide clearing I pulled off again to get Todd and Terry back in sight, and was briefly reminded of the old days, the way-way-way-wayback days, when I used to ride between the front and back groups on the climb, making sure everyone was accounted for.

For the most part, as long as there's a wheel in front of me, I'm fine. That's where the "Is it by choice I suck" comes in, because I do choose to sit right behind a wheel and try to hold onto it for dear life, and when the pace gets moving on the flats or slight descents, I have no pride whatsoever in letting the person in front do most of the work so I can survive the ride.

What I don't quite get is that I'm feeling a lot better than I should be for this time of year. My miles are down, I've been traveling, it's a challenging time of year at the shop, and the weather is not-so-great. But so far, I've kept the weight down and I feel relatively strong. Life is good on my bike.