

## At 55, I'm scared to death that, if I slow down, I'll never get back up to speed again!

George, Karl, Leslie (pilot-Kevin's friend), Kevin, Eric, John, Millo, Marcus, Karen... that might be everybody, or I might be missing someone. What wasn't missed was a day that turned out so much nicer than expected! I put on the long-fingered gloves but really didn't need to; it probably started around 54 degrees and was up to 64 by the time I got back home a couple hours later. No complaints!

Since it was a Tuesday I knew it would be a bit harder than the Thursday version of our ride, but hard is really what you make of it yourself. Starting up Kings I'm now making sure to not set the pace at the beginning, since people complain that I go hard and then blow up. Not sure how that's a whole lot different than what I'm doing now... waiting for Marcus and John and Karl to pass by, and then hanging onto their wheels for dear life until... I blow up! The end result is the same; no way can I maintain a torrid pace all the way up the hill. Yet. Working on that one! And I think my new life as a bike commuter is helping out in that regard, since my 15 minute ride home includes a stiff climb at the end, and no matter how tough the day has been, no matter how tired or hungry I am, I still punch it as hard as I can.

Once we get to the park I get a chance to rest for a minute or two, and then continue up the hill at a bit more moderate pace. It's still tough seeing the fast guys head on up ahead though, and I'll still try to get back up to them at least once, an effort that pretty much destroys me. As usual. But today at least I got in two hard sprints, with George



This is what tells me I've got it- when you see someone looking back at you. If it's a drag race, there's no point. The only reason to look back would be if you are thinking about cutting someone off (tactics) or shutting down if you don't like your chances. pushing things each time. Looking at the video I shot during the ride, I saw something that I key on during the sprint, without thinking about it... George pulls ahead, takes a quick glance back and then takes off. It's that glance that tells me I've got it. If you're serious about a sprint and it's going to be an all-out drag race, there's nothing to be gained by looking back, unless you're thinking about backing down, and if that's in your mind, you've lost already. In George's case, I think he's just curious and wants to know where he is vs myself or Karl. If it were a tactical sprint, knowing exactly where the other guys are makes sense, but for either the Skegg's or Sky Londa sprints, the tactics are played out well before the actual sprint (while you establish your position... basically, whose wheel to sit on).

The most-interesting part of the ride for me wasn't a sprint though. George and Karl had gotten out ahead on the 84 descent into Woodside, with me in that no-man's land between them and a few some distance behind. Normally I'd be inclined to wait for those behind if there was much of a gap to the front guys, but today? Today I wanted to see if I could run George & Karl down, in particular on the Tripp Road section where I normally run out of gas and am happy to sit on someone's wheel. But today I managed to bridge the gap to them, after which Karl promptly attacked, leaving me behind. Good tactic on Karl's part, since it took me completely out of the final sprint.

This is what I do for fun. Or is it, This is what I do for fun? To tell you the truth, at 55, I'm scared to death that, if I slow down, I'll never get back up to speed again! --Mike--