

A ride just a bit more "eventful" than necessary

Kevin (my son, not the pilot) is now out of school so today was his first "summer" Tuesday/Thursday-morning ride. OK, it's not actually summer, and OK, it's not actually even feeling like normal spring weather either, with overcast skies and cooler temps. But it's dry, and lately, that counts for something. We headed out a few minutes early, to give Kevin a head start up the hill, so the faster guys (and girl) would have a rabbit to catch. And for a while, we were doing a pretty good rabbit imitation, with Kevin starting out slowly but working up to a pretty good speed by the time we got to the park entrance.

In fact, once past the park, it was looking like this was finally going to be the ride that Kevin could get the 30 minute monkey off his back (his previous best being about 30 minutes, 40 seconds). Things were looking really good until just past the half-way hairpin. I hear Kevin call out "Seizure!" and look back to see him quickly coming to a stop. At this point you've got about 8 seconds before he becomes... I don't want to say useless, but unable to do anything. There's a drill for this- I tell him to get off the bike and lie on the ground. Which he quickly did, before losing consciousness for about a minute and a half, attracting attention from a car heading up the hill and a cyclist coming down, both of whom I had to explain that this is not something to worry about, it's a "normal" thing in our abnormal world. Within 4 minutes of his seizure we were back on our way up the hill, and heading up fast enough that only two of the faster guys (Marcus & John) were able to pass us, if I'm recalling correctly, and we were able to hold off at least one person we saw behind (Eric) as Kevin quickly came back up to speed.

It's comforting to know that his seizures don't have to cut the ride short or even have a negative effect on his performance, but it would be even-more-comforting to not have them at all.



Kevin holding onto the "train" for dear life on West-Side Old LaHonda

At the regroup at the top we had, let's see, Marcus, John, Eric, Karen, Darryl (whom we haven't seen in a very long time!), Karl... seems like there were more? We had a reasonable pace until things started breaking up a bit on West-side Old LaHonda (often the case), where I told Kevin to stay on Karl's wheel, which he dutifully did until the steeper part just before the forest. That's when the wheels came off, but not completely, as I paced him through the forest and back up to Skyline, not that far behind the fast guys at the front. But the fun was yet to come.

Heading down 84 into Woodside, Kevin and I held back a bit from the fast pace at the front; I'm not sure if Kevin's getting a bit more cautious about descending after his non-seizure-related crash that tore up his knee back in September, or because he's concerned about the possibility of an ill-timed seizure, but I'm not going to push him to go faster downhill (I'm sure once we get to France he'll once again get competitive with the locals and be flying down faster than I'd like!). But today it turned out to be a good thing to be a bit behind, as coming around one corner we saw two of our riders (John & Karen) on the ground and a car across the road. Actually, Karen was already up by the time we got there, and John wasn't that bad off as I helped him to his feet (just a bloody knee).

The car had been coming up the road and turned into a driveway on the opposite side, right at one of the corners, giving us no warning whatsoever. She (the driver) should feel fortunate we were bikes and not a car; anytime she's making that turn she's playing a percentage game, making an assumption that it won't be at the exact time that someone's coming down the hill. At least this time it was primarily damage to John's bike and not much to his body (or Karen's) despite having slid on the pavement in an attempt to avoid hitting the car.

I'm now left to wonder if paranoid people should be riding routinely with video cameras, recording what's going on around them.

Rather 1984-ish to say the least!Â --Mike--