

Kevin does Kings under 30 minutes, Big group, NO RAIN!!!

I'm ready to declare the end of rain. From now through November, it's clear skies and warmer temps. Windbreakers are to be left at home, the rain bike can be safely stashed under the house, and you no longer have a good excuse for continuing to carry around your "hibernation fuel" around your belly. Good times are ahead!

And a very good time it was this morning, perhaps one of the last times that I have to head up the hill a bit ahead of the group when riding with Kevin (my son Kevin, not the pilot). Kevin's wanted to break the 30 minute barrier up Kings Mtn for some time; Tuesday he missed it by 15 seconds, and today, for the first part of the climb, I thought he'd be lucky to get 32. We hit the traditional half-way timing point at just over 16 minutes, not a good sign. In fact, the three timing points I use to gauge my progress on the first half of the climb were all looking pretty bleak, with each successive one being further off the mark than the one before. My theory is that Kevin had eaten way too much way too soon before the ride (a very large bowl of cereal) and was seriously bogged down.

But then something clicked. Kevin claims he started doing his new chant-

Never stopping,

Never sleeping,

Never eating,

Always riding.

It worked. On that nasty steep section in the middle, before the open part, Kevin kicked it up a notch. Or two. We hit the "open" timing point (road marker that says 1.41 on it, the distance in miles to the top) at 20:30, still below the 20 minutes "required" for a 30 minute time at that point, but still accelerating. Normally, if you're going full-tilt, it's 4 minutes from the last hairpin (at the archery range road) to the top, and you really do have to be pushing to pull that off. We were, if I recall correctly, just outside of that. But by the time we got to the penultimate timing point we had pulled even with a fast pace, at 28 minutes. Just two minutes left, and as long as he didn't die, he had a chance. Let me tell you I had a very tough time staying on his wheel on that final stretch, and he finished in 29:42. 18 seconds to spare.

But the ride wasn't all about Kevin. This was our largest group to date; not even sure how many, probably a dozen or so, and a good opportunity to edit an all-around video of the entire ride, which you can see below. You'll notice it has the same soundtrack as the video of Kevin's climb, and actually starts out showing Kevin finishing Kings (and then the rest of the group coming up behind; we had a 5 minute head start on them).

Sorry about the blotchy screen in the lower-right corner for the last couple of minutes; a bit of crud kicked up from a rider in front and stuck to the lens. Obviously, the answer is to ride in front of everybody, but that fails on two counts. First, I'd have to be faster than everyone else, and second, a video without bikes in it is hardly worth calling a video, is it?