

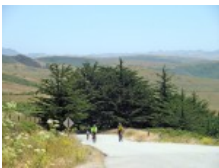
First pre-France test of Bike Fridays

It was meant to be a longer ride, but that wasn't the fault of our Bike Fridays. The plan was initially Woodside, Old LaHonda, Pescadero, loop down to Gazos Creek and back to Pescadero, north on Stage and back via Tunitas. Due to the warm weather we decided to drop the Gazos Creek section, but more pruning was soon to come.

Since we were on our Bike Fridays and not our lighter-weight and more-responsive Trek carbon bikes, I knew we'd be climbing Old LaHonda a bit slower than Kevin's recent and rapidly-improving times, but the presence of large numbers of rabbits (cyclists ahead of us) and the fear of being passed by dogs (cyclists behind) was propelling Kevin strongly; so strongly in fact that, at the half-way point, he was slightly ahead of his best time ever (23:24). But literally within 20 feet of the top he had one of his more-significant seizures, causing great concern among the many cyclists who traditionally assemble at the top of the climb. I let them know he'd be fine in just a couple of minutes, but it's got to be an odd thing for someone not familiar with epilepsy to see a cyclist struggle to get off his bike and then stagger around a bit before collapsing to the ground. Me? Old stuff. I know he'll be fine shortly, and just make sure he gets laid gently on the ground (although today I couldn't get to him in time).



Kevin sitting in the window at the San Gregorio General Store, talking with Dario (friend & customer)



Riders approaching Highway 1 on Stage Road, just north of San Gregorio

Within a couple of minutes he was mostly fine, but had lost his desire to keep going. I knew this was temporary so we moved on, but by the time we got to La Honda I decided we'd alter the ride a bit more and drop the Pescadero loop in favor of a slightly-shorter Los Lobitos addition. Given a bit more time (and, ironically, a bit of climbing), Kevin would have been fine with the original plan, and in fact by San Gregorio he was feeling very good.



Heading north on Highway 1



Kevin on the easy part of Los Lobitos; looking across the ravine you can see the hard part.

We fueled up with a Coke and Clif Bar and then set out to tame Stage Road, Los Lobitos and Tunitas Creek. While it had been getting quite toasty on the bay side of the mountain (and in the picture showing riders climbing Stage Road, you can see it's rather heat-hazy up on Skyline in the distance), it was a very comfortable mid-70s on the coast. Dario, a customer we came across at San Gregorio General Store, rode with us as far as Los Lobitos and then continued on to Half Moon Bay (where he'd be eating lunch before turning back and doing Higgins Purissima and then Tunitas). Los Lobitos is one of those roads that starts out deceptively-easy and fun, and then turns into a pretty nasty, steep climb that winds around and eventually connects with Tunitas a few miles in from the coast.



The "other side" of Los Lobitos, seen in the prior photo

By this time Kevin was back to his old self again, riding strongly on the steepest sections and taking advantage of his superior lungs. Hearing Dad's lungs noisily trying to snag spare oxygen seems to make him climb even faster. That's OK, I still have more power in my legs; I just have to use them wisely, knowing that a sustained effort is going to put me into oxygen debt that I won't quickly recover from.

Los Lobitos was the one piece of road we saw no other cyclists on. Actually, we did come across one cyclist, riding in the opposite direction, but no rabbits, no dogs.



Kevin riding up Tunitas Creek, clearly working it hard

Tunitas Creek? Same as it ever was. Steep, creek still running (surprisingly strongly), and today, so many cyclists on it you'd think there was an organized ride going on. Kevin kept a strong pace the whole way up the hill, clearly enjoying the fact that his current level of fitness allows him to pass so many others on the climbs these days. We did adopt a mellower pace on the flatter section up on top.

If we'd known how hot it was going to get as we descended back into Woodside, we might have spent more time on the coast! By the time we got home we felt like we'd had a far tougher ride than the 46 miles indicated, but the ride's main mission, proving that the Bike Fridays were ready to tackle France in less than two weeks, was accomplished. The time I spent Saturday getting it set up identically to my Madone paid off very well. Now if I could just fix Kevin's epilepsy as easily as I can deal with bike problems.

--Mike--