

2nd place is no better than 5th

Way way way back in the day, when I was a junior racer (15-18 years old), there was a family from the midwest that dominated bike racing- the Stetinas. Dale & Wayne, I believe (Dale is now a stock broker, and his brother Wayne a high-up person at Shimano bicycle components). They used to arrive at races in a huge motorhome, and their father was legendary for badgering other racers as well as his own kids. At one point one of his sons had "only" come in 2nd place, and Roy Stetina, "proud" papa, was heard to tell him "2nd place is no better than 5th!" That was the shot heard 'round the world; from then on, the standing joke, if you were 5th in a race, was to ask to trade prizes with 2nd place because, after all, it was no better than 5th.

I bring this up because today, in the final sprint, I didn't have what it took. I just couldn't close the gap in time to Chris. Maybe I wasn't pushing a high-enough gear, maybe I should have sat down sooner, not really sure. Or maybe I just wasn't strong enough. Chris later said that another 10 feet and I would have had it, and that's when the "2nd place is no better than 5th" line came back to me. It didn't matter that George and Kevin and John and whomever else were back there. What mattered was that Chris won and I lost (as seen in the short video).

Regarding the other 25 miles of the ride, it was yet another beautiful morning, third day in a row of riding for myself and Kevin as we prepare for France (we leave a week from Thursday). For reasons not explained or easily understood, we had an exceptionally-easy, dare I say lazy pace up the first half of the hill until something finally triggered Chris to start pushing the pace, at which several riders went forward (Chris, Jim, John, George & Todd) and several others backward (myself, Kevin, Eric and Terry). People may have expected heroics (again) from Kevin, but we had decided beforehand to take it a bit easier and try to avoid him having a seizure (thankfully, he didn't).

I did ask Kevin tonight if he was in a good position to see Dad lose the sprint. He was. Now trying to figure out if it's good that he was up there, or bad that he saw me fail. :-)