

Woodside/Santa Cruz loop with Swanton Road addition

It's really tough to top the big ride we did in France- the Glandon/Croix de Fer/Telegraphe/Galibier loop. Probably impossible. Not even sure I'd want to! But it would seem terribly insignificant to just do a loop out to the coast, so today Kevin (my son, not the pilot) and I did the Woodside/Old LaHonda/Pescadero/Santa Cruz/Highway 9/Skyline loop, something we've done a number of times, and added in the Swanton Road detour for a scenic diversion from a few miles of Highway 1 (which is so busy at this time of year that the noise from cars does a lot to break you away from the pleasant experience cycling should be).

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113 miles, about 9200ft of climbing, moderate pace (15.1mph average) broken up by a flat tire Kevin got on Highway 9 on the return. Along the way Kevin got his best-time yet up Old LaHonda (21:38), which he thinks his new Madone is largely responsible for, as well as shaving a minute off his usual time up Haskins.

Unfortunately, the usual tailwind on the coast wasn't there, so that part of the ride was a bit of a grind. I was also try out a route that would bypass maybe a mile of the most-congested part of Highway One through Santa Cruz via King Street; it literally was so jammed that it was unsafe to try and make the left-hand turn required to get there. Since this was one of those things that looked good on a map but I didn't really know how it was going to turn out, we didn't go to any heroic efforts to try.

Ride details: 108 miles as shown on the map (starting from the Park & Ride on Woodside Road just west of 280).
Climbs- Old LaHonda 3.34 miles 1287ft, Haskins (Pescadero Road) 1.65 miles 601ft, Highway 9 east of Boulder Creek (when the "real" climb finally starts) 7.6 miles 1800ft. In addition there's a couple thousand feet of small & rolling climbs.

It was interesting to feel, at the 100 mile mark, like I could just keep on going, maybe tackle one more big climb without feeling like I'd pushed the limit. Sad to think that, in a couple months, such capabilities will be just a memory. --Mike--