

What gives a ride bragging rights?



So let's get this straight. It's literally freezing (32 degrees) outside, and we're out on our bikes, pretty comfy actually, while passed by a car with windows up, heater turned up to "7th level of Hell" setting, and the driver's wearing ear muffs. And probably complaining about it being cold.

The chart below shows this morning's regular Tuesday-Thursday ride, and references distance, speed, climbing, heart-rate... all the usual things that the usual people use to determine how tough the ride was.

But is that really enough?

What about road conditions (clearly 100k on nicely-paved roads is a lot easier than the same distance on rutted trails), the bike you're riding, and how you're feeling on a given day? For the most part we compare road rides to other road rides, and off-road rides to other off-road rides, and how you're feeling is pretty subjective. And for the bike, we'll just assume everyone's riding the fastest, smoothest-riding, best-handling bike there is (obviously, a Trek 6-Series Madone, which we'll be happy to sell you!).

▼ Details	
▼ ⌚ Timing	
Time:	2:11
Moving Time:	2:06
Elapsed Time:	2:11
Avg Speed:	14.0
Avg Moving Speed:	14.5
Max Speed:	37.7
▼ 🏔️ Elevation	
Elevation Gain:	3,54
Elevation Loss:	3,60
MinElevation:	339
MaxElevation:	2,27
▼ ❤️ Heart Rate	
Avg HR:	126
Max HR:	163
▼ 🌡️ Temperature	
Avg Temperature:	33.0
Min Temperature:	24.8
Max Temperature:	48.2

How about weather? If we want to come up with a truly insane ride, something epic, shouldn't weather factor in? That's where that last set of numbers come in. Temperature. A two-hour ride with an average temperature of 33F. Just one degree above freezing. A minimum temperature of 24.8F. Maximum 48.2 (probably just outside my east-facing garage, which the sun had heated up). How much cred do George, Kevin, Kevin, Eric, Todd and I get for riding when it's that cold outside?

Truth be told, we were pretty comfortable, partly because we dressed appropriately (even stopping a couple times to add or remove windbreakers), partly because we know enough to ride at a consistent pace so the motor keeps the body warm but doesn't run out of

gas, and partly because we enjoy talking to each other about our recent rides (George just got back from the UCI Cyclocross Masters World Championships, where he took 8th place!) and what's going on in our lives. Nevertheless, cold is a starkly-definable and easily-dealt-with adversity compared to the rain that is coming our way shortly.

It's tough to assign a number or otherwise quickly define an epic rain ride. "It was crazy out there, trees blown down, rain so hard your eyes were constantly stinging from the sweat washing down your forehead, and almost no cars on the road because sensible people were staying home rather than driving in that muck!" Yeah, I've had those rides, and during the 3 or 4 day window where people really remember what the weather had been like that day, you get substantial street cred. After that, it's just another ride in the rain.

But a number defining the temperature doesn't lie, and translates equally well to the physically-fit and the couch potato. 24.8 degrees. That's a number that will define today's ride tonight, tomorrow, next month, 5 years from now, without degradation. At least until I figure out a way to see if my Garmin is reading correctly and not 3-4 degrees too low, which might be the case.
:-) ^ ^ ^ --Mike--