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Riding with guys half your age

I should know better than to ride with guys literally half (or less?) my age. But for good or bad, I feel like I have more in common with most 25 year olds than I do 55 year olds. I want to be fast, and don't believe it's beyond reason that I can get faster, while many 55 year olds are paying attention to AARP (American Association of Retired People) and thinking about cruises and getting senior citizen discounts at movies.

Actually, I don't even know how old the guys I ride with are. Todd? Late 20s maybe? And Mike & Andrew? Maybe very early 20s? It's actually a bit strange thinking I'm twice as old and then some. Besides trying to keep up with them, my main concern is to not become those older guys I rode with when I was much younger, who'd keep trying to come up with ways to put the young guys down because they had bad form or didn't do things just right. Besides it being a way to try and make up for them (the older guys) being slow, it also had the unintended effect of backfiring on them, causing us younger guys (yes, I was young once) to really want to ride them into the ground. Which, of course, we did!

Todd, Mike & Andrew don't try to ride me into the ground; they just let me run near 100% for as long as I can before they eventually get bored and take off. On today's Woodside/Pescadero/Tunitas ride, our early start (7:45am) meant that it was still pretty cool out, so my breathing was pretty ragged climbing up Old LaHonda. I was OK on the moderate grades and had them waiting for me when it got steep. A pattern that repeated later in the day as it got warmer, so it's probably not really fair blaming my 22 minute time up Old LaHonda on it being cold.

Best reason to not ride quite-so-early to the coast? Because the Pescadero Bakery doesn't open until 10am! Fortunately, the general store/coffee shop/bar just down the street opens earlier, so I was able to buy a coke to help with the grades on Stage Road. And yes, it was beautiful out there! No clouds, hardly the slightest breeze and not much traffic.

I'd be lying to say that I was looking forward to the Tunitas Creek climb; up to that point I'd taken a few pretty short pulls at the front but didn't feel like I had my good stuff this morning. We held together until just past the Bridge of Death (the bridge over the creek on the right, just as it starts to get steep) and then I got to watch them charge up the hill while my world was literally swaying from side to side. About 15 minutes later I caught up to Andrew (on the upper, flatter part of Tunitas) and we paced ourselves back up to Todd and Mike, who'd been soft-pedaling for a while so they didn't finish the climb a day ahead of us.

In the end about 58 miles, just over 15mph average speed (sure seemed faster than that!), and back before noon.