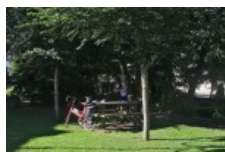


Epic fail on Tourmalet today

Thankfully, most of the ride went fine, just the climb up the Campan side of the Tourmalet. An "easy" 100k ride to see today's Tour de France stage, only it appears I have some issues when it gets really hot. Dang, I used to do pretty well when it's hot, and I still do fine (better than fine, actually) on the flats and even into headwinds when it's hot. But today on the Tourmalet, that was not my finest two hours.

Kevin had no such issues; he could ride at whatever speed he wanted up the hill. But starting at about 8k from the top, I was sweating more than normal, I was losing power, and finally had to do the unthinkable. Yes, I actually walked about a kilometer up hill.

At least I didn't lose anything permanent, like Cadel Evans did today. Another 4 minutes off the pace, so there's no way Cadel can even hope to make the podium in Paris this year. Me? I just lost face to my son, although there was some measure of redemption on the return when we hit quite a headwind on the gentle lower slopes of the Tourmalet, and I had quite a train of riders drafting behind me for quite a few miles. That, I'll admit, was fun.



Eating at a small park on the way to the Tourmalet



One of many cokes along the way. On a hard ride, worth every penny, or rather euro. Typically 2.50 euros.



Arriving at the top of the Tourmalet. Quite a scene.



Proof that our Bike Fridays made it!



Yet another coke; this at the base of the Tourmalet, on our return



Check out Voeckler's eyewear. One clear, the other reflective?



I've always wanted to see my reflection in a guy's glasses. Never have. But my bike made it. Jens Voight no less!





Most-painful expression of the day



Look ma, no hands



The art of drinking from a water bottle



A lot of green



???



10 minutes later, the main field rolls through, including an ailing Cadel Evans