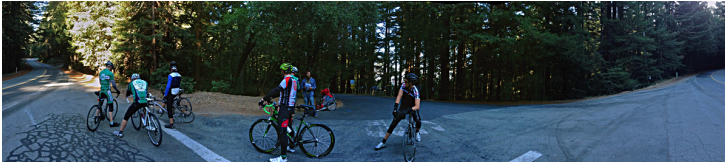


Better than I expected. Much better!



After Sunday's easy ride, and the continuing aches from muscles and bones that have never complained before, I wasn't expecting much from this-morning's ride. That plus the scale was telling a story I didn't like either; I saw 176.5 lbs last night, not the 173 I should have seen. And it was a bit on the cool side; 53 degrees at the start, 53 degrees on the climb, 53 degrees up on Skyline... you get the idea. But for some reason I felt pretty good, even heading out to the start. Can't tell you why, but it's pretty consistent that, once I'm on the bike, issues with my shoulder, stiffness in my legs, all the "soft" aches & pains just go away. Not in a small way, but as in completely disappear! What in heaven's name would I do if I couldn't ride?

For a short time I even flirted with the idea of a sub-27 time up the hill, but that was not to be, coming in at about 27:30 or so. I was able to keep Kevin & Zack in sight up front (they were about a minute ahead) and did my best to stay ahead of the guys lazily heading up the hill behind (although it was great motivation knowing they were back there, and could, at any moment, turn on the speed and try to run me down, so I'd better keep moving as fast as I can).

Much-bigger group than last Thursday, including Karl, Zack, Chris, Kevin, Kevin, John... no Todd, no George. Almost a social pace, although things did get pushed a bit on west-side Old LaHonda, where I was more than a little surprised to be in the front-group (Zack & Chris, with not-the-pilot Kevin catching up to us before long). I felt good at the beginning, middle and even the end of the ride. Don't think it could have gone much better! Oh sure, I could be winning sprints again (that ship hasn't sailed yet), but it's going to take some time getting back to that level. In the meantime, I'm just enjoying the ride.