

It wasn't supposed to rain

There was no rain in the weather forecast when I went to bed last night. None. Zero. Zip. Nada. So what do I wake up to? Rain. OK, heavy drizzle, but certainly nothing that's going to dry up in the next 35 minutes and let me ride my "nice" bike. Plus the "leisurely" 35 minutes I allow between the alarm going off and getting out the door suddenly becomes not-so-leisurely as you have to get all your wet-weather gear on. Motivation for doing things more-quickly seems dulled by the realization you're going to have a tougher time out there because you're riding a bike with slower tires, fenders, and an accumulation of crud from the past few rain rides.

But the icing on the cake? The rain bike (my Trek 5900) has a flat tire. Discovered at 7:28am. Need to be out the door by 7:32am to get to the start in time. Still got a few other things to do... this isn't going to work out. So I grab the Bike Friday Pocket Rocket instead and head out the garage, with Kevin, at 7:38 I think. This was one of those "We're not going to make it, are we?" moments. On our "nice" bikes it's an 8 to 9 minute ride to the start. On dry roads. Figure 11 minutes on rain bikes in the muck. 10 if you push it. The ride leaves promptly at 7:45am. We arrive promptly... at 7:48. Nobody's there (they shouldn't be, they know the rules!) but was anybody there? We look for tire tracks, but it's inconclusive. On Albion I'm pretty sure I see recent tracks though. No way to catch whomever might be ahead of us, so instead we ride up through the midpoint and backward on the route, from Sky Londa to Kings, hoping to catch them in the other direction. It worked; we came across John and Eric descending towards Sky Londa, just slightly behind schedule.

Because my Bike Friday doesn't have fenders I rode in the back; in general, riding when it's wet, without fenders, isn't allowed on this ride. It's just not nice to have water spraying up at everyone else, but of course I'm a professional rider on a closed course. Not! I'll look into some fenders for my Bike Friday; hadn't give it any thought up to now, but it's actually a very capable rain bike. The small tires didn't have an issue on the tar stripes, and the brakes worked better than expected.

In the end the ride was only 29 miles total, not 30.4, but that's a lot better than not riding at all. And it gave us a chance to figure out what needs to be done to reintroduce ourselves to real winter riding, when it's a lot colder than 44 degrees. Need to remember things like wearing a hat under the helmet (allows you to keep the rain out of your eyes by simply tilting your head down a bit) and which gloves work best when soaked (none of them).