

## Toughest 75 miles last week, toughest 56 miles today, what's next?



What's missing? Mr. Mustard's hot dog stand, that's what? 80+ degrees, dying on the climbs and you're really looking forward to an ice cold coke... and it's not there. Did I arrive too late?

56 miles should not have been as difficult as it seemed to be! It didn't start so badly; a nice cruise south through the foothills with a stop at our Los Altos store to use the bathroom and check in on things (they looked busy, which is good!) and from there it was all downhill. Or rather uphill. Uphill being, in this case, Redwood Gulch and Highway 9. I had these fine ideas of trying to do the climbs seated, so I could get some decent video. What stopped me? 80+ degree temps, riding by myself, and there's no way around it, I just don't have what it takes anymore when it gets really steep.

But what made it worthwhile was knowing that, once I got to the top, Mr. Mustard's hot dog stand would be there, with ice cold drinks and, yes, hot dogs. A hot dog has to be one of the worst things you could eat on a ride, but it's not as bad as you think. The right place at the right time makes the difference.



Tried feeding it dollar bills, even a 10 but it just wasn't hungry! But Mr. Mustard wasn't there! Just checked the time stamp on a photo I took... 4:44pm, and he's usually there until 5. Thank goodness for the Saratoga Gap fire station just down the road, with its outdoor coke machine. Just a couple minutes north on Skyline. I am so looking forward to something cold to drink. Get to the fire station, feed it a dollar bill, and... it's not taking it. I mean it's not even making a noise like it wants to. Maybe quarters would work, but dollar bills aren't today. Had to settle for making some more Cytomax, which probably was better for me anyway and I did, in fact, start feeling a bit more lively shortly thereafter.

What finally got me going was being passed by another cyclist, the only cyclist I saw on all of Skyline. For a (brief) moment I let him go and then thought hey, I don't have to do that, I've got legs, so I chased him down and stayed with him the rest of the way. He did drop me pretty quickly descending 84 into Woodside though.

Overall glad that I got out there, but it will be nice when Kevin's past his kidney issues and riding with me again. But I remain concerned that my "tough" rides are getting shorter and shorter... what's next, a 25 mile ride that does me in? Hope not! --Mike--