

## The plan failed; no Santa Cruz loop today

It was supposed to be possibly the last Santa Cruz loop ride of the season, the "usual" 113-miler heading over Old LaHonda, Haskins, Cloverdale, Gazos Creek, Highway 1 and then back via 9 & Skyline. We got off to a late start (what else is new?); I was concerned about not making it up to Saratoga Gap in time (arrive later than 4:30pm and Mr. Mustard might be in the process of packing up & leaving). What wasn't expected, but I should know by now, is that Kevin tends to develop kidney-related pains if a ride starts later than 9:30 or so. No good reason for it, just happens. And so it was that, by the time we got up towards the top of Old LaHonda, Kevin was developing some really severe flank issues.



Kevin pointing to the exact location of his pain

And at the same time, I'm heading towards a new PR for the climb! So do I ditch an ailing Kevin, or hold up for him? I did the Dad thing and held up. Don't know why I was doing so well this morning; it certainly didn't feel like I'd be flying up the hill. Maybe it was because I had decided to force myself to stay in the saddle the entire way up the hill?

Haskins was dreadfully slow, almost 20 minutes, twice as long as normal. Kevin really didn't start to recover at all until we approached San Gregorio, which in itself was a bit of an effort, due to all the gravel they'd laid down on Stage Road. And for what? Why lay gravel on a non-oiled road?

In the end, it was just over 60 miles, and less than 6,000ft of climbing. A far cry from the planned 113 miles with 9000ft of climbing! And on perhaps the most-beautiful, perfect day of the year for riding too. Low to mid-70s, very light breeze, low humidity. It just doesn't get too much better than that.