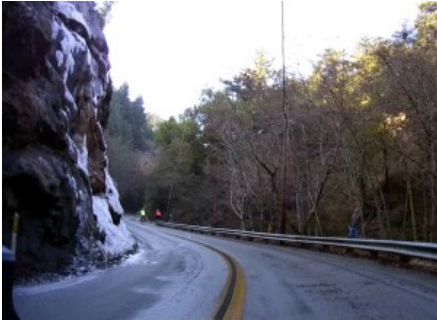


We needed the miles, and rode like we needed the miles



Did somebody say it was warming up? This was found just before climbing Redwood Gulch

OK, actually I was fine, it was Kevin that suffered like a dog through the middle of our 88 mile ride through Woodside, Cupertino, up Redwood Gulch, up 9, down the other side of 9 to Boulder Creek, up China Grade (quite a bit of "up" on this ride!), back up 9 then south on Skyline back to 84 and down into Woodside again.

88 miles from home, 82 miles from the traditional start of all rides, that being the corner of Olive Hill & Canada Roads in Woodside. 8600ft of climbing so not actually a "tough" ride by the convention of 100ft of climbing per mile, which would have required 8800ft of climbing.

Kevin needed this ride more than I did; he had an epiphany of sorts yesterday when he realized how much faster he was riding last year than now. He even had ideas of doing a Santa Cruz loop until I introduced him to the basic math that proved that just wasn't a possibility. Let's see, out of shape so assume the worst, 13mph average speed, 112 miles, so you've got 8.5 hours riding time, add 45 minutes for food stops and you're over 9 hours. Too dark to ride about 4:40pm so you'd have to be on the road by about 7:30, assuming everything goes right. So Santa Cruz was a non-starter. My proposed ride made more sense because, at 24 fewer miles, it should take about 2 hours less time.

The first part of the ride went nicely as we picked up Nigel (a regular on our Tuesday/Thursday rides) and introduced him to some new routes along the foothills. He climbed up 9 with us but turned to go back home via Skyline.

What I didn't count on was Kevin not adequately maintaining his bike (so his worn out cassette was causing severe chain skip on Redwood Gulch, almost bringing him to the ground once), and his body going into semi-automatic (ie, "slow") mode for the middle third of the ride. There was no power to the pedals until... until I bugged him about needing to eat more, when we were on the east side of Skyline, climbing up highway 9. He got mad and took off. I mean really took off. Talk about turning the pedals in anger! He was out of sight in no time. I knew better than to try and match his speed because there were a lot of miles still to cover.

The rest of the ride went at a pretty good clip; if we'd ridden that way the whole ride, we would have been home an hour earlier.