

Patience rewarded- Cycling is awesome that way!



An ominous sign, when you see Vultures eyeing you from four consecutive fence posts!

It's happened again and again, and yet again today. You're supposed to ride, and it's a beautiful day, but there are other things you could be doing and would it really hurt if you skipped out? But you know where that leads (you find more and more excuses for not riding until you really don't feel like riding because you're so out of shape and can't keep up with your friends and eventually you become a couch potato) so somewhat out of duty you get out there. And it doesn't feel really good at first, and you start up Old LaHonda and it seems like no gear is quite right, you can't develop a rhythm, but about halfway up you notice you're not doing that badly, and by the time you get to the top you're feeling pretty darned good!



Yes, it's rather brown for January!

That's how it was this morning. Just me; Kevin's off to Disneyland with his sister, so I did a "reference" ride, the Coastal Classic. The usual up Old LaHonda, over Haskins to Pescadero, Stage Road to Tunitas and back over the hill and down Kings. By the time I got to Haskins I was feeling pretty good, good enough to try and get a decent time up the climb, and on the other side, that nasty lead-in to Pescadero, 5 or so miles with a bit of a headwind? I just looked at the power meter and told myself I was going to push just like I would on a climb. My best time for the section from the Flamingo House (bridge crossing in the forest) to Pescadero is 13 minutes, but that was without a headwind, maybe even a tail wind. I was about 13 seconds off my 2nd-best time of just over 14 minutes, but the effort felt worthy of a Klingon.



Not a good sign when you're wasted at the base of Tunitas, before even getting to the climb!

After a stop for a blueberry scone and drink at the Pescadero Bakery I headed north on Stage, thankfully without the stiff headwind you often have at this time of year. Nevertheless the Vultures were waiting for me, literally, 4 of them on a fence. The brought me to a quick stop; you don't often see four consecutive fence posts adorned by Vultures! Fortunately they weren't waiting for me; my nose led my eyes to a rotting deer carcass at the edge of the road.



Off in the distance is the "rabbit" I'm chasing down, just past the ranch with the old Pepsi truck that's been there since the last big drought (1976?)

I continued to feel pretty good on the junk climbs of Stage Road, and started thinking hmm, do I have to take Tunitas seriously today? In fact, I did push fairly hard on the bottom (flatter) part, eventually seeing a rabbit (rider up ahead) to chase down. Not until I started to pass him did I recognize it to be Jeff K, a rep we see at the bike shop on a regular basis (and whom I've ridden with from time to time). To tell you the truth I was relieved to come across him, since it took the pressure off the climb... I could now climb at someone else's pace, although his pace was a bit faster than I'd remembered in the past! But always nice to have someone else out there on the climb with you, even if the pace isn't easy enough to have a conversation about *Breaking Bad* (he's a big fan, actually, the person who introduced me to the show).

In the end, just another really nice bike ride, perhaps nicer than normal because it didn't feel that nice at the start. You gotta love that about cycling. You get out there and you just can't help but feel better after a while. --Mike--