

And it didn't even rain



You really don't want to see this, such a short distance up the hill. See what? You can hardly see them at all, as they ride away from me. Such was my climb up Kings this morning.

First "rain" ride in... months. My rain bike hasn't seen action since who-knows-when, but it did in fact rain overnight and it was in fact supposed to keep raining for a while this morning, so the Madone stayed home and my rain bike, my 2002 Trek 5900, came out to play. Play? If that's what you can call the sadistic way it treated me, then sure, play. The difference between my 2010 Madone 6 and my rain bike is huge. Or at least that's how I imagined it, because it made a good cover for the possibility that I was just having a really off day. I knew it wasn't going to be fun just heading over Jefferson with my son, and was already thinking that I should have done centerlines (measurements that would set up the rain bike exactly the same as my Madone). Things just didn't feel right.



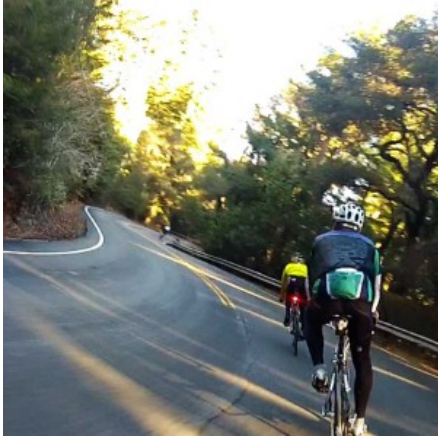
The rest, not-so-patiently waiting for me at the top of Kings

Besides Kevin (my son, back from Disneyland), we had Eric, Karen and JR. Yes, the roads were wet, but it wasn't raining. And thankfully, while you could see oily rainbows on the road, it wasn't too slick either. But as soon as the road tilted upward, traveling through Huddart Park, I was off the back. Way off the back. About halfway up I was completely alone, not even catching a glimpse of them at the top of the big hairpin. I was thinking the seat was too low, so I pulled over and raised it a bit. Got back on the bike, and quickly realized it was too high. Kept riding for a while, but actually gave some thought to the idea of walking for a bit, I felt so bad. I knew for sure I wasn't going to finish the full ride; no way to get back home in time to get to the shop, not at this pace. At the wide open spot on Kings I stopped again, put the seatpost in-between where it started and where I'd raised it, and got going again. 36 minutes later (yes, 36!!!) I got to the top, thinking hey, at least I finished the same day I started.



Just another spectacular view from West Old LaHonda

And then things started to get better. I was able to roll along Skyline with them, and when the opportunity came to cut the ride short and head straight back into Woodside instead of heading west to Old LaHonda, I decided what the heck, I can hurry things up when I get home and still make it to work on time. I was even able to go to the front at times descending into the headwind towards West Old LaHonda, and didn't have too much trouble staying with the rest on the climb back up to Skyline.



Kevin racing away from the rest of us on 84

The descent back into Woodside was interesting; the road wasn't too wet, but wet enough to slow us down a bit. All except Kevin, who was flying off the front. Huh? Same Kevin who hasn't been descending too well lately, on dry roads? Pretty much confirms my theory that descending is all about confidence, and when Kevin climbs really well (as he did today, leaving the rest of us behind on Kings, some more than others...), he descends better.

What did today's ride teach me? To listen to my own words. That you can feel like garbage early in a ride, but feel a whole lot better as the ride goes on. In the end we got back only 10 minutes later than normal, which wouldn't be unusual for an actual rain ride.