

## I could get used to this (and the return of a killer squirrel)



From left to right, George, JR & Kevin (pilot) at the all-important post-ride assessment conference

OK, so you get a bit spoiled by cloudless skies, but this is winter after all, so the fact that most of this morning's ride was overcast really isn't a big deal. But what I didn't expect was the pretty easy pace for the first half of the climb up Kings, even though the big guns were here. Those being Keith, Kevin (pilot) and George. Eric, Karen and JR are also strong enough to give me a rough time if they feel like it (especially JR), but today, nobody seemed to feel like it. Finally, just before the wide clearing, Kevin, Keith and George picked up the pace and were gone.

What I'm not sure about is if I could have held up better had the pace been just a bit tougher early on. Bad breathing or not, the legs still need to get pushed pretty hard so they're ready to go really hard. Doesn't make much sense when I read that.

Adding interest to the ride was a killer squirrel on the descent into Sky Londa. Hadn't seen one quite so animated in a while, and this one was vintage killer squirel. Races from the right side of the road to the other side, sees you, and then stops... right in the middle of the road, and reverses course. Right in front of your wheel. If it had just kept going, it would have been easily clear. Maybe it's an intentional game of chicken? You be the judge; I've included a video.

Despite the killer squirrel attack, I felt pretty good on the descents, taking the lead all the way to the Sky Londa sprint. Normally that kills my chances at taking the win, but Keith came by at exactly the right time, giving me a wheel to slingshot off of so I could beat George to the line. George claims I didn't ride "clean" but the video I've looked at shows me gradually moving to the right after passing Keith, which should have given George more room. Obviously, he's just bent about losing the sprint. And for me, a relief.

And the other Kevin, my son? Nasty cold kept him home today, and I certainly wouldn't have sent him a photo from the Woodside Bakery where the other Kevin, George, JR and I were enjoying coffee and pastries after the ride. No, I wouldn't have done that.

--Mike--