

Not as bad getting back on the bike as I'd thought it would be



There's a new color in the coastal mountains today... green! Kevin's pretty green too.

Last ride was Sunday, March 2nd, and a rain-shortened ride at that. Then early Monday morning I was off on a plane to do the bike lobbyist gig in DC, arrive back 3am Friday morning... so I was both looking forward to today's ride, and curious, not really dreading, how it would go.

The first thing I notice when I get back on the back after a week (or longer) is how wonderful it feels. And how high you are above the ground. Seriously, I think that's one of the cool things about cycling, the manner in which it elevates you, puts you in the clouds as it were. When walking you have your feet on the ground but cycling... you'd normally think being disconnected would be a bad thing (in a holistic way), but that's not how it feels. You're alive, your equal parts earth & sky. All your senses are engaged. No matter how long it's been, it feels good. Great even.



Kevin and Steve at the base of Tunitas. We'd sold the bike Steve's riding to him... 65,000 miles ago!

But for how long? Time to find out, using the "Coastal Classic" loop through Pescadero and back via Tunitas. Old LaHonda... well, nothing too fast there. Heart rate up at the higher end (which is typical after being off the bike for a bit), and maybe a minute slower than I'd otherwise be, at 22-something. Haskins Grade, on the way to Pescadero? Just over 10 minutes. If I could have hung onto Kevin's wheel, it would have been just under. This surprised me; I was figuring something more like 11 or even 12 minutes. But entering Pescadero came the first sign, or lack of, that not everything would be rosy. Because there was no sign! Kevin and I get set up for the Pescadero City Limits sprint, and the signs not there. Talk about being all revved up with no place to go!

After the mandatory stop in Pescadero for pastries and a coke it was off to Stage Road where, approaching the first climb, I didn't feel like I was running on all cylinders, and dreading getting over Tunitas. But bad as I was feeling, I was still keeping up with Kevin, and the watts from the power meter weren't looking that bad.



Kevin dropping off the pace a bit climbing Tunitas

On the lead-in to the Tunitas climb we came across Steve, on a Trek 5200 we'd sold him 13+ years and 65,000 miles ago. Hard to sell new bikes when they last that long! We'd actually seen him earlier on the ride, heading up Old LaHonda. He was setting a pretty good pace and I'm wondering if I'm burning the matches a bit early, but once things got steep, I found myself feeling pretty good, and he eventually dropped off the pace Kevin and I were setting. And then Kevin dropped off the pace and began to do his yo-yo thing, where he'd ride really fast for a minute or so, pass me, then blow up. It's not the most-efficient way to climb, and after a few times he did a number on his calf muscle and limped in along the flatter part near the top. Need to get him set up with a power meter, so he can learn what sort of pace he can actually sustain.

In the end a nice ride on a beautiful day! Maybe 70 degrees, give or take a few, so no leg warmers, no base layers. Just 11 days more of this terrible winter weather to go, and then we'll see what spring brings us!