

## Sub-27-minute monkey off my back plus crazy times getting ready for France

Yes, Kevin and I did ride last Sunday, our prep ride for the Bike Fridays before heading to France. The "Coastal Classic" route, since we needed a reference, familiar territory that we could judge how we were doing on our travel bikes. It was one of those unusual days where you had a headwind going out to the coast, and a headwind coming back up Tunitas. What's with that??? It was also unusual because once again I had the upper hand on Kevin once we got to Tunitas, but he hung in there, and even after stopping twice up the climb, once for a seizure, once for something else I don't recall, we still got just under an hour.

This morning (ok, yesterday morning, Tuesday) was more significant. Quite a few of us and we started out hard up the base of Kings. I hung on for as long as I could, and by the time I was jettisoned it appeared possible, not likely, but possible that I could make it up the hill under 27 for the first time this year. And I did! Just barely; 26:51, and there's some doubt that it even happened since Strava didn't capture the usual Kings segments for me today. But the old fashioned manual method (pushing the start button at Tripp, then again at the top) was good enough for me.

Long night tonight, finally leaving the shop at 11:35pm. Lots to get done prior to heading to France on Thursday morning! I think the shop's in good hands though. Becky (my daughter) can run things pretty well, MikeF will keep the mechanic side of things working smoothly, with some help from Chris, and Margie has this way of melting the harshness of any customers who might be in a less-than-awesome mood. Of which, of course, there are very few. New guys Alex and Austen have worked out great, Roger, Jose and Charlie are keeping the bikes flowing through the repair department, and we're even getting some help from Andrew, a Chain Reaction alumnus, who's going to be helping out on Saturdays while Kevin and I are gone. Now I gotta figure out if I left anybody out. Don't think so. Oops. That would be Karen, my wife, who will be called upon to help out when it's busy and make sure reps don't get out of hand.

Time to get to bed. One more long day ahead at the shop, and then Thursday morning a flight at a ridiculous hour (6:50am????!!).  
--Mike--