

Redemption & Linearity



The Bridge of Death on Tunitas Creek, real name "Mitchell Creek Bridge" and the beginning of the infamous "Hammer of Thor" Strava segment

There was no reason to suspect that Kevin would have no legs this morning; he's been riding normally, nothing strange in his defies-medical-theories body this week (no weird kidney or epilepsy issues). But he was struggling to keep up with me up Old La Honda, and heading up Haskins to Pescadero was almost painfully-slow.



Talk about pushing through sludge!

So what was different? Two things did stick out; first, due to allergies coming in early due to our lack of winter, he'd taken a Zirtec. As did I. Second, no coffee. That was probably the killer. No coffee. Not, apparently, much of an issue for me, but different story for Kevin.

So we did Pescadero a bit differently, first stopping for coffee and that little place on the main drag, just south of the Pescadero Bakery. As Agent Cooper would have said, Damn fine coffee! Not cheap, but very, very good. Followed that up with the usual chicken sandwich & coke & mandatory oversized cookie. Figured that would reset things and he'd get back to normal.



Coffee in Pescadero

Kevin was gradually coming back up to speed on Stage Road until one of his seizures hit just starting the first climb. That's where "Linearity" comes in, as it became clear to me that seizures do something of a brain reset and, as he comes out of it, his disorientation is a sort of temporal displacement. The reason he can instantly come back like a rocket is because the point in time where he emerges from a seizure is not the sum of his experiences up to that point. OK, that's a bit confusing. Look at it this way- wherever we are, we got there by way of a linear string of events that led to it. When Kevin has a seizure, that string is broken. If he was tired before, he might not be afterward. Whatever mood he was in doesn't correlate to the mood after. This helps to explain why, when he comes to, it takes him a while to figure out where he is, even though he can "see" where he is. Without the context of getting there, the brain doesn't process things the way it does for most of us.



"Food" in Pescadero

OK, enough psycho-babble. Kevin didn't really come alive until we hit the main climbing section of Tunitas, but even there, it was a bit of a struggle to keep him on my wheel. Still, my wheel was going pretty strongly, so he was doing a whole lot better than earlier in the day! But the "redemption" part came after passing Star Hill Road. That's when Kevin kicked things into high gear and it was tough for me to stay on his wheel. Complete turnabout. Sadly, I didn't pick up a Strava segment for that section, so I don't know how it compared to other attempts. With the GoPro Hero2 mounted on the front of my bike, the Garmin doesn't lay down tracks as accurately as it should (the GoPro sends out a lot of electrical interference when on). Main point of all of this is that Kevin rode this section fast & hard, in stark contrast to everything preceding it. And yet, we still ended up just a second or two over 50 minutes for the climb. Grrrrr. It was easy to tell that's what he was gunning for.

I'm sure Tuesday he'll be back to his old self and dropping me like a rock up Kings. --Mike--