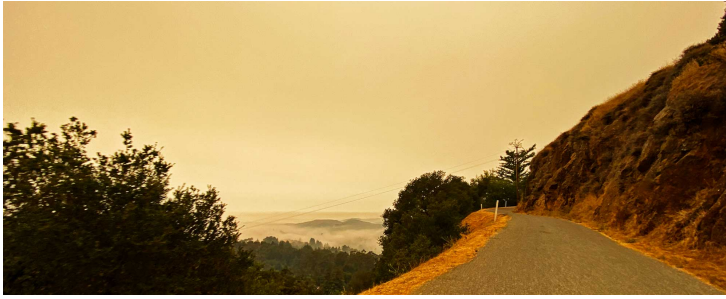


I got Jeff'ed again! But 222 watts average weighted power, so I'm good.



If not for the orange skies, this would be a pretty cool picture, with the island coming up through the fog. So it was looking like another lonely morning, with Kevin still nursing his banged-up knee, but that was OK, I was down for that today, unlike many past solo rides where I really felt a need for company. I enjoy a mix of solo and group rides, but when it's solo after solo after solo, it gets old after awhile, and you have too much time for introspective thinking, with your mind sometimes going to dark places.

But today, I started out with a bang, leaving just a minute or two late so I had to go flying up over Jefferson... and it felt good. Surprisingly good. Legs working, lungs kinda maybe ok. No surprise though that nobody else was at the start. I'd texted the other Kevin (pilot), but he'd reserved a ride with someone a bit slower and leaving a bit later. So I wait until the GPS-accurate time of 7:45am rolls around and I'm off and riding, still feeling pretty good.

And I kept feeling pretty good right up to the park entrance, which was... closed. Darn. So much for powering up through the first part of the park! There should be two separate Strava segments for the section through the park; one for when the gate's open, the other for when you have to dismount and squeeze between the rock and the edge of the metal gate. So momentum lost, but I still felt OK, still pushed as I could, still got gassed on the steep section where the deer watch you.

The upper gate? Open. Go figure. Last week the lower gate was open and upper closed. So I make the high-speed high-g turn onto Kings (yeah, I wish) and try to maintain a reasonable pace, and then, look back, just before half-way, and there he is. Again. Jeff. Long gone are the days I could try and hold his wheel for a while. He waited at the top for a few minutes and we immediately headed South on Skyline. About 57 up on top, slight smell of smoke but not too bad, not at all like it is as I type this, at the shop, at 6pm. Ash falling almost like rain.

Even on Skyline it takes some effort hanging onto Jeff's wheel, but on the steeper short sprint sections, I could still find something in the legs to push, hard. The legs really felt pretty good today. At least they did until West Old LaHonda. Jeff is dangerous when he feels good. I held on for dear life until the big U-turn at the end of the valley, and then my wheels came off. I phone in the rest of the effort, and even then, still got one of my better recent times.

Up on Skyline Jeff continued north while I descended 84. The interesting thing today was that nasty little hill after you've finished the descent and head towards Tripp Road? I was able to keep it over 400 watts all the way up. I really thought I'd be a bit cooked by then, but cooked or not, the legs were still working. Made it back to the start by 9:21, which puts me on a schedule similar to the old days (when I was fast). The only bad part about the ride was thinking that I was supposed to be flying to France this afternoon. Tonight I even looked up the seat map for the plane; a 787 with about 40 passengers. Everyone had multiple rows all to themselves. Social distancing to the max!