

Double Trouble

Solvang Double Recap

By: Curtis Taylor with Scott McKinney

Scott McKinney and I pulled out of Solvang for a round trip 200 to Morro Bay at 6:25 Saturday morning -- about 1 hour ahead of the 35 timed riders. I figured Scott would ride off into the morning sun when they rolled by us sometime before noon. That's not quite how it played out. There was no morning sun and the two guys that passed us did so during our warm-up. They were a 24-hour recumbent record holder (516 miles) and Mojo from Davis on a fixed gear who was preparing for "The Big Fix" (<http://www.fixhistio.org/>). Mojo road with us until the first decent where he dropped off the pace at 180 RPMs! The dude on the recumbent road into the pending storm and was never seen again. No one else passed us the entire rest of the day.

The course was good, wet, not so well marked, wet, had a nice tailwind in the morning and the afternoon, more wet, and finally dried out in the afternoon. There was much talk about abandon all around us. In fact at the second rest stop about mile 82 (after 50 miles of steady rain), a yellow cab pulled into the parking lot as we rolled out. I believe I even heard rumblings of "I'm cold. It's wet. Why am I doing this?" coming from those very nearby when we came upon 73 year old Gurt (http://redbikephoto.com/2005_knoxville_double_century/image14.html) who was wrapped in rain gear and pedalling like "abandon" was not in his vocabulary. I never heard another word of it even though the rain poured on for several more miles.

Through the rain poured for about 65 miles, we actually got to experience clear roads during the best parts of the ride. In the early morning we rolled through Santa Ynez valley just below mountains apparently created along an earthquake fault line. In this 30 miles section there was no traffic and the views included wineries and rolling hills. In the middle of the day the roads were again dry as we road through Pismo and along the coast on Highway 1. In this portion we could see the ocean beaches and golf courses. So mentally enjoying the better portions of the ride was much easier with the rain hitting us hardest as we pedaled through San Luis Obispo and Highway 1 up to Morro Bay.

One of the most inspiring moments during the ride came just before the 100 mile mark. As Scott pulled us on Highway 1 to Morro Bay head into the wind at 22 mph he told me the last gal we passed looked at us, let out a gasp, and said something like "Oh My God!" Scott may have been trying to amp me up so I could hang onto his wheel longer in case he needed my frame pump. In any case, it gave my head a boost. Maybe it was just Scott's eye on the clock because I don't think it was more

than 10 minutes later when Scott proclaimed "That was a 5 hour century, dude!" (my fastest century by at least 30 minutes!)

There were a few mishaps along the way but no big fouls. (Presuming Scott doesn't show back up into town with a cast on his wrist and the truck I let go after hitting me doesn't try to say I hit and ran.) By late afternoon the sun did finally arrive. Scott and I managed to roll out of the final rest stop with a 20 minute 8mph climb ahead of us and the first 3 of the timed participants on our heels. On that climb we saw Jeff Landauer several hundred yards behind us. All Scott and I talked about after seeing the "big guns" arrive at the last rest stop was when they were going to pass us and how we could draft them to the finish. Of course Scott, with his eagle eye on the clock, was probably trying to inspire me to ride fast enough to come into town with the big guns to ensure we would break 10 hours. As it turned out, Jeff and 2 others of his caliber pulled into the finish no more than 5 minutes behind us and we got our 10 hour double.

Lessons learned (By: Scott McKinney)

Curtis, You're too kind. Great recap. Here's a few things I learned from Saturday's epic adventure:

- NorCal has no lock on rain. Gutters in and around San Louis Obispo were gushing.
- You can ride a PR* in the rain. (*194 mile course. 9:48 ride time. 10:35 total)
- Wash your "head sweats" before you ride. When it gets wet, old sweat turns to salt and gets in your eyes. Ouch.
- Riding in the rain beats standing in a rest stop and getting hypothermia.
- Don't support Planet Ultra events unless you need the Triple Crown points.
- In a 10-hour event, everyone suffers sometime. Curtis and I took turns suffering and cranking.
- Some riders are rock solid (and useful) for two or three hours before they crack.
- Don't try to turn on top of those yellow reflector bumps (sprained wrist and bloody knee). Also, don't pass cars on the right. Some will turn in front of you without warning (I had a front-row seat for Curtis' tangle with a side mirror).
- Water + sand renders Velcro useless, causing seat bags to drop onto rear wheels (clip style strap = solid attachment).
- Water + sand renders chain lube useless, causing extreme squeakiness (use grease, or carry lube, or get lube from tech support).
- Training works. So does tapering. (Rule of thumb: You can equal your weekly mileage in a one-day ride or double the distance of any one training ride.)
- 'Tis better to ride in daylight than dark. Many other riders started at 4:30 AM and finished at 9:30 PM. Imagine riding a steep climb with a technical, twisty, chuckhole-ridden descent -- in the dark. Harrowing!
- Don't let Curtis fool you. He rocked the course.