
SATURDAY, APRIL 5, 2014 AT 9:49 AM



Final Pre-Event Training Ride

Our last weekend ride before the season's first event(s), the Bottega Gran Fondo in Napa, CA, immediately followed by CTS Climbing Camp in Tucson, AZ. Today's objective: PR on 9-Mile Hill, a locally known training route that has a consistent 2 - 4% grade for...you guessed it, 9 miles. My PR is just under 37 minutes, which officially puts me in 30th place on Strava...ugh! My goal this season is to take 5 minutes off that PR, which would leap me into 10th place...Lyn Off (who I virtually aspire to on Strava and currently holds that spot),

here I come (whoever you are :).

Today's ride was a mere 50 miles (vs. last weekend's 60-ish miles, which I seriously suffered through, sore hamstrings from yoga too close to the ride being the primary culprit, and/or just a bad day). We reach 9-Mile Hill at about 30 miles into the ride and generally join LOTS of cyclists attempting the same suffrage, today being no different, particularly in Arizona's beautiful spring weather.

We did decent leading up to 9MH, at least matching previous lap bests/averages...then, the race is on! Johnny was suffering from the same sore legs I had last weekend, but it's all relative, so his sore legs essentially give me a fighting chance to match his strength, a concept he doesn't seem to fully grasp when he's flying off of stop lights and such, leaving my half pint size in the proverbial dust.

At the bottom of 9MH a small peloton of riders (maybe 6 guys) took the corner and started their journey just ahead of us. For a fleeting moment, I believed it worth trying to hook onto their stream, but could quickly tell my efforts would be futile. If my lovely husband would have stepped up to lead, it could have been a possibility, but ahhh, the sore legs!

Approximately 2 miles in, the small peloton (who shall remain nameless for fear of their utter embarrassment at what happens next ;) apparently needed a natural break, so hands in the drops, music blaring, and mentally focused, we sped past them. Now, for those of you who do not cycle, a peloton (particularly of strong male cyclists) can generally easily catch/pass an average solo, female cyclist on an average grade over a (remaining) 7 mile distance...but not today, faithful readers, not today!

My lovely husband shouted encouraging words from behind, as after 21 years together, we know each other's mental state, even without words or visual contact, and he'd already gleaned my new objective...to NOT be caught! His inspirational messages included things like "Go Tiger" and "Sucking them up and spitting them out today!" as we sped past all the weekend warriors, one by one.

Alas we reached the top and I hit the lap button...well, we matched our ride time from two weekends ago, which is still 2 minutes more than my PR and a LONG way off of my goal, but hey, they never caught us, and that was all that (ultimately) mattered! We are nothing if we don't adapt to new circumstances and challenges, so today was still a success...and my husband/friends say I am "anti-sport" and not competitive...pshaw, I say! Further analysis post data upload revealed that in fact, I did achieve my best power on 9MH and managed a few other segment PR's, which my husband explains by insisting that my 9MH PR included a tailwind day...I believe it was a day he actually lead while I drafted, but either way, I'm going to call it a win.

So, we are now enjoying well deserved, post-ride pedicures while my lovely husband laments our upcoming vegan meal, which will in no way satiate his appetite today...and I'll keep hearing about it until he is alas asleep tonight...assuming I do not terminate his life prior due to the excessive complaining (he is currently quite "Hangry"...must get food in this man, quick, before I commit a crime!).

33.7559° N, 111.993° W •

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