

A Long Hammer in need

By: Jeremy Barnes

A beautiful day for some hills one Saturday morning, I thought, and a beautiful day it was. Our ride was to be from Karen's Bakery through Folsom, Serrano hills, Bass Lake road and a Lotus Road water crossing later up prospector road and back. I was doing well for my standards, trying to catch up with the group ahead at the rest stops for water refills and nutrition. Once we got to prospector grade we were on our own to go up and back down Marshall Grade to the next water hole. As I began to climb this "thing" I was getting a little tired. It was a windy narrow road on the way up, but I was having trouble climbing so I made it a little more windy. I was doing switch backs, just to keep moving up this, now twice as long hill. I got to a point where that didn't quite work any more, so I had to stop and stop and stop. I was hoping to see the guys come back down this same hill soon. Did I mention that I have no idea what the course is. Little did I know prospector came to an end to Marshall Grade, which took us back to the resting point. I finally made it to the top and only halfway home.

After the water stop we continued back. I was slowly losing sight of the group and knowing that I could be left behind at anytime. I saw them one last time at the top of a hill that I still needed to climb. I came to an intersection that I recognized from the ride up, a water stop at the local maxi mart along Greenvalley and Cameron Park Drive. I continued on and thought that I was now lost until I saw Bass Lake road cross Greenvalley. With my trusty Garmin I knew I could get home the way I came, but was it the right way home? Thinking most of our rides are a loop and rarely double back, I had little idea on where I was. So I headed back the way I came not knowing, again, that Green valley was a very nice down hill straight back to the start, where the day would have been done and I good tough ride was under my belt.

However I took Bass Lake road and back into Serrano hills with the lovely neighborhoods that have no end in sight. I soon came up to Wilson hill that I came down at 46 mph just hours before. Two girls were walking up this hill as I started and wishing I could do the same, but the humiliation would have got the best of me so I continued on. I could see the end of the hill in site, but remembered as I got to the top I had more hill up and to the left into the bazillion dollar homes.

Over the mountains and through the woods I went and Folsom was in my grasp. Ten miles, 45 minutes and 3000 more feet of climbing than my cohorts, I was back. I thought I had taken a detour to hell. My legs were shaking and the body shut down was in the process. I then realized and perhaps a little earlier I just needed a Looooooooonghammer and about 5000 calories.

Lessons already learned:

The cue sheet is your best friend.

The Garmin is your second best friend.

Cheers.