

Ron Smith's (photos by much slower Greg Jones and Randy Graves)

PCH Randos 300k

February 2nd, 2008



The inaugural PCH Randos 300k started at 6:00 am, when it was still quite chilly in Malibu. We were taking off an hour earlier than on the 200k. The sun, and any kind of warmth, was an hour away. Hopefully the weather will be as good as



on the 200k, but rain was in the forecast for Sunday, perhaps even arriving this evening. My plan was to finish by dusk, avoiding the colder evening and any inclement weather. This time there were around 35 riders, which is still quite a turn out for a 300k. Pre-ride nutrition consisted of a donut, simply because there was a box of them at the start, provided by David Nakai. I can't honestly remember what

kind I had, but I do remember it was good. JV and I were riding together again. By the second roller out of Malibu we had left the rest of the group, and weren't going to see anybody else for the rest of the day.

The first control was not until mile 56. It is nice to get a third of the ride done before having to stop. Same as with the 200k, the trip up the coast was fast. This time, once we got to Ventura, we took the Ventura River Bike Trail inland to the control at the Corner Market, on Santa Ana Road. We were met with Bobbi Brownies, licorice and water. After consuming our share (ok, I ate mine and JV's) of brownies, and filling our bottles, we were off.



The route from here took us up to Route 150, where we hung a left and climbed over Casitas Pass. As usual, over this road, the descents were as good as the climbs. At the right turn on Highway 192, at mile 71, JV went straight to go back to the start. He was saving his legs for an event in a couple of weeks.

I was to ride the next 115 miles solo. The climb up Toro Canyon was short, but steep. My 24x28 granny made it easy but slow. At the next control, near the top

of the climb, there were drinks and wraps available. I couldn't chance either because I was riding too hard. A refill of my bottles, and I was off.

East Mountain road, which is on the next section, has to be one of the best cycling roads in Southern California. It isn't fast, with many hairpin turns, but it sure is interesting. There is even a water crossing, which fortunately wasn't slick, although it did have a couple of inches of water flowing across it. We also had to deal with the first information control. When reading the description of the control, and what to look for, it seemed complicated. However, any misgivings I had about how the control was identified went away as soon as I saw the uniqueness of the items I was looking for. Very cool.

After getting off East Mountain I was able to make good time to the next control, in Goleta. This was at mile 98, at the top of the ride. After this it is a straight shot down the coast, back to Malibu. While at the control I had another donut, and a pint of milk, also courtesy of David Nakai.



Unfortunately straight didn't equate to fast through Santa Barbara. First I had the Obern Bike Trail to follow for a while, then I had to slow down to figure out the information control a few miles into this section, and then I had to get through Santa Barbara itself. The scenery again was fantastic. You

see the Channel Islands across a bit of ocean. Only once I got south of Carpinteria, on the open roads, did my speed pick up. Even with the sun fully up, the temperature didn't get very high. Leg warmers and a windbreaker were necessary to stay comfortable. It was going to get cool once the sun went down, that was for sure.

This section, from Goleta to Port Hueneme, was 55 miles. Legs this long give you the chance to get a lot of miles out of the way before having to stop again. As I was going through Ventura, and approaching Port Hueneme, I was eyeing the level of the sun, trying to gauge if I could make it back by sunset.

Too close to call.

Before leaving this

control I put on my reflective gear, vest and ankle bands, just in case. Plus I downed the pint of chocolate milk that David bought me in Goleta. I like this guy. Now there is a ripping tailwind helping me down the coast. Although there are times the wind comes in from the side, and even from the front, for most of the time it is behind me. I get to the bottom of the climb at Zuma Beach before having to turn on my lights. The coastal rollers aren't too bad this time, allowing me to get back to the start about 30 minutes after dusk. Warm pizza and a warm coke make for an excellent post ride meal. The ride again was very well supported.

