

RSF, Del Dios, HVR Hammerfest Ride Report

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By Rob Verfurth

The planned route for our Saturday ride was similar to the route Oleg designed for the Sheehan Nifty Fifty ride to celebrate the big 50 for Dave earlier this year. It covers some good track in North County. We had a couple of guests for the ride this week-Flo and Jürgen. They have ridden with us before and are both super strong riders. I knew I was in trouble when the rest of the group was led by Rick B, Rick W, Dave Voris, Tony and Jeff L. Where were the guys who were going to ride in the back with me? We headed toward Santaluz and picked up Bob P to add another fast rider. I hung on the back as usual.



Group Start at 56 bike path

The descent down Three Witches typified the early part of the ride. Flo was on point and kept up a fast pace until Rick W sped to the front to increase the pace. I barely hung on the back and still set a PR down the segment averaging almost 33 mph; the hammerfest had begun. The group flew along El Apajo and up towards Stud Loop. I was determined to hold the pace and wheel of the front guys for as long as possible. Jürgen, Flo and Rick W split off the front a bit but I was able to hang onto Rick B, Voris and Bob P at the turn onto Stud Loop. I set a few more PR times on various segments approaching and riding stud loop. Rick and Voris did all the work and we caught Flo just before the end. Everyone regrouped and we met a new rider, George, who rode the same Stud Loop route and knew Jürgen. We now had 10 riders in our group as we headed for Del Dios Highway.



Flo leading along San Dieguito Road



Cruising along El Apajo

My attempts to stay in the hammerfest failed as the climbing came back up towards Lake Hodges started after a blistering early pace on Del Dios. I rode alone, watching most of the group roll away from me. Despite a push that yielded another PR time past Hernandez Hideaway, the group waited for several minutes at the top of Lake Road. We again hammered on Via Rancho Parkway to the gas station to fill water bottles. Voris had a family reunion while the rest of the guys rested a bit; his brother and family happened to be getting gas.



Riding Lake Hodges path to pedestrian bridge



Rick W leading up HVR Climb

The plans after the rest were to climb HVR. Jeff L had to head home for family and Bob P headed back as well. That left me in more trouble with the fast guys but thought I was saved by Voris. Dave wanted to go slower and fewer miles. We talked about a leisurely pace up HVR and cutting off at Archie Moore

Road and back toward home. I was very pleased to let the hammerfest continue without me. We rode across the pedestrian bridge when I made my break.

Rick B hit the crosswalk button while I took a hard right up the side path and over I-15. I pushed to HVR and sped along figuring the guys would quickly catch me and I would finish the climb with Voris at our planned leisurely pace. I hammered to the start of the climb and up the first set of curves, no guys in sight yet. I kept pushing as I saw the group coming from below. I did set a PR on the HVR first climb but I was getting tired. Where could I stop to get a good photo? The curvy road made it difficult so I finally stopped above the Bandy Canyon turn to wait for the guys. Rick W was leading the way and flew by me when he told me Voris headed to home. Rick B, Flo and Jürgen sped by and Tony followed continuing up HVR. I was alone and told Tony I would ride my own route.

Just up ahead was the right hand turn onto Camino Del Aguila. What better time to explore the steep roads? I was not holding anybody up. I love this road and steep sections. It allows for a number of exits and routes if you want to explore. You can get back to the top of Starvation Mountain or descend all the way back to Poway towards the Heritage and Maderas Golf Club via Stagecoach Road. This would require a bit of BWR technique over hard dirt roads, but I think it can be done. I also know there is a route back to HVR via Green Valley Truck Trail. We have usually exited at the main Eagles Crest Road entrance. This is a good, paved road but you have to go around a big gate to get back to HVR.



Camino Del Aguila climb

I explored a bit and spoke to one of the area residents out for a walk with her dogs to confirm the available routes. I decided to play it safe and cruised out Eagles Crest. I got to the top of HVR and took the turn onto Sky Valley for a bit more wandering.

Sky Valley loops around through orchards, vineyards and large houses, coming out right by the elementary school on HVR. I rode over to Archie Moore and cruised along 67 back to SPP. I thought I might again see the hammerfest guys if they added Mussey Grade to their ride but no one came as I headed down SPP. I decided to roll by Rick's house to see if he was home yet to pick up my recent kit order. Rick was home, having just returned from the ride. They skipped Mussey Grade. I got my bib order, stuffed it into my shirt and head for home.

The final miles along SPP, Mercy and up Black Mountain were not too bad since it was a beautiful day. I got home with about 57 miles ridden and just over 5,000 feet of climbing. It was a fun hammerfest and then leisurely exploration of HVR ride, a great way to spend the morning.