

Andalucian Cycling Experience

Passionate about pedalling, Bonkers about bikes, Mad about mountains

La Sufrida de Ronda

9am wheels were a rolling, we all rode over the first timing mat and the adrenalin surged as 600 riders got underway. We had a Police escort for the first 50k, through Ronda and along to Zahara with traffic being stopped to allow the Peleton through. 15k's in and the first major descent out of Ronda was very wet, the heavens had opened again, the spray from the bikes made it hard to see the road ahead and then....just a few metres ahead of me was the first crash of the day, wheels touched and one poor rider found himself sliding across the asphalt at 40kmph. Ouch!! I managed to avoid him, as did everyone else, which in itself was amazing! I then decided that I should get myself to the front of the group to avoid any possible mishaps on the next descent. So as we crested Puerto de Montejaque I was leading the peleton into the next descent. Now I would consider myself reasonably capable at high speed descents, but with more spray coming up off the road faster than being jet washed and a strong cross wind I decided to take it easy on the down and was passed on the inside and outside by some very rapid Spanish riders....scary!!



The clouds had nestled themselves on the top of Las Palomas and I cruised up to the top in around 55 minutes, this was the first place to get your book stamped and for refreshments and there seemed to be a lot of riders just waiting around in the rain so I pushed on not wanting to be descending in a big group down Palomas or down El Boyar. The visibility was very poor down to around 50metres and a 15km descent in the wet can only be best described as 'a white knuckle ride' as I hung onto the break levers as if my life depended upon it!! How much nicer this would have been on a sunny day!

4 hours in and I was exactly where I had planned to be, I was happy and ticking along at an average of 25kmph. Everything was on target for the time that I wanted to achieve. 10km later and it all started to go wrong! Four plus hours of riding in the wet and cold played havoc with the leg muscles and I started to cramp. Not being able to get and keep my legs warm meant that on every climb the cramp kicked in! No climbing out of the saddle and not being able to push hard through the cranks meant my speed on the climbs was very slow. Although I was making up for this on the descents and also by knowing the course, I was not looking forward to the next 80k.

My arrival in Cortes, 122k into the ride, was met by good and bad news. The bad news, with the prospect of another 70k of riding and 1700m of climbing I was beginning to wonder if my legs would carry me through to the end. The good news, due to Health and Safety reasons the organisers of the event had decided to shorten the route by 30k which meant we only had 43k left to ride! Game on! This was do-able. The climbs hurt like hell the descents over all too quickly but I made it to the end in 6hrs 50mins. Average speed 24kmph. 165km 3250metres climbed and I now know why it's called 'The Suffering'



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I think, had I not of cramped up so much then I could of finished 30-40minutes quicker!

Next year I'll put some training in and give it a proper shot! Anyone who wants to join me let me know as the subscription for next year opens in November!

