

Some of you may recall my stories about Casey not liking to cross water. The uncompleted ride was the Fireworks Ride, near Santa Cruz. That ride includes two crossings of the San Lorenzo River. The first crossing comes just 3 miles into the ride, down a steep trail, through mud, and around boulders into knee deep water. Safety personnel are stationed on each side of the river to help. Casey decided very calmly that this did NOT look safe and he refused to enter the water. He watched all the other horses pass him by and guess what - none of them came back! Clearly, this did not look good for any horses who crossed. We spent an hour at the crossing, trying everything we could think of to get him to go into the mud so he could reach the water. Nothing worked. My friend's horse also refused to cross - if Casey wouldn't, it definitely wasn't something Khobi wanted to do! We returned to camp, having traveled a grand total of 6 miles. Since the horses were healthy, AERC scores this as a rider option pull.

I do think Casey will eventually cross this river. Fireworks is a great ride and I intend to complete it with my third horse!

I had hoped that Casey would complete his first 50 mile ride at Lake Sonoma this year. However, a week after Fireworks he popped a large splint on his right hind leg, so had to have 6 weeks off while that healed. That set our conditioning back a bit, and when we went to Lake Sonoma November 1st, we simply did the LD again. This time we completed in an even 4 hours of ride time.

Our goal this winter (depending on how much conditioning the weather allows) is to move him up to a consistent 8 mph travel rate. Hopefully, we'll be able to start in the spring with a 50 mile ride! Guess I'd better also get myself into shape.

We've had a number of challenges - boots, feeding, electrolytes, etc. - and I know others will pop up. I enjoy sharing these issues with you all. If any of you have any questions about Casey's progress or about endurance riding in general, please feel free to contact me or come ride with me. Paces slower than 8 mph can be arranged!