Skier injured in avalanche at Mt. Rose

By Frank X. Mullen Jr., Reno Gazette-Journal

Early Tuesday, Bryce Henderson and Trent Marietta, two experienced back country skiers from Reno, followed nearly all the avalanche safety precautions when they set out for an area called Fireplug near the summit of Mt. Rose Highway.

But a wall of snow, 18 inches deep and 200 yards wide, broke loose, swept down the mountain and swallowed Marietta as Henderson watched helplessly.

“We did a pit test to check snow safety and went down separately. The first run was fine,” said Henderson, 22. “Trent went first on the second run. He did three turns and the snow just crowned on him.”

The avalanche caught Marietta in its grasp. He tumbled and rolled inside the snow wave. He tried to swim out of it, Henderson said. The moving shelf of loose snow approached trees. His backpack caught on a branch and when the snow stopped moving Marietta was buried up to his waist.

After checking on his friend, Henderson went for help. Marietta had injuries to his chest and face and was brought by Careflight to Renown Regional Medical Center in Reno, where he remained under treatment late Tuesday. He was able to ski a short distance down to the helicopter after it landed.

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