Enthusiastic snow lovers flock to Heavenly



Snowboarders and skiers enjoy good coverage on limited terrain at Heavenly on Nov. 23. Photo/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

It didn’t matter that only one run was open. Hundreds of people were taking lap after lap after lap at Heavenly Mountain Resort today.

It was opening day after all and people had pent up energy having not skied since April.

Not everyone, though, was on the mountain to ride.



Playing in the snow instead of skiing is more fun for some people. Photo/Kathryn Reed

“We were both off all week and we said let’s go somewhere we’ve never been. And here we are,” Heather Toxey of Birmingham, Ala., told *Lake Tahoe News*. “We paid 100 bucks to ride the Gondola up to see what it was all about.” And she had no regrets.

Toxey was all smiles talking about the snow, what she has seen in Tahoe – and now she plans to come back in the summer.

Neither she nor her husband, Derek, ski. They were perfectly content to hang out in the Tamarack Lodge.

The lodge was full. And like most holiday periods not everyone had ski or snowboard boots on. It was just about getting that vibe of being in a ski lodge. For some youngsters they were more interested in building snowmen and throwing snowballs outside of the lodge.



Hundreds of people turn out for the first day of the 2016-17 season. Photo/Kathryn Reed

For the more serious they were getting off the gondola while others were still buying their ticket. Martin Hollay, who is in his mid-90s, was departing the gondola about 10:30am Wednesday. (The legendary skier from Hungary was instrumental in designing the cross country course on the West Shore for the 1960 Squaw Valley Olympics.) He is at Heavenly nearly every day.

On the other end of the age spectrum was a 2-year-old in the season pass line with mom who was holding the little one's skis.

For Allan Zhang, 15, he got in a little late Tuesday night with his family so he was trying to catch some zzzzzzs at lunch in order to be ready to go back out for some afternoon runs.

He and his dad, Eric, drove up from San Jose for a couple days.



Allan Zhang of San Jose rests before heading out later Wednesday afternoon. Photo/Kathryn Reed

“For the first day it is very good. We want to start early and enjoy the entire season,” Eric Zhang said.

The only lift operating on Nov. 23 was Tamarack.

The roar of the snowmaking machines was loud. Visibility was limited in the morning. The weather was definitely better at lake level than on the mountain – but that wasn’t a bad thing because at times it was snowing. It is plenty cold to keep making snow.

Between the fake stuff and Mother Nature more lifts and runs will keep opening.

Just being able to snowboard on opening day was satisfying for Chris Conover. He moved to South Lake Tahoe four months ago from Fresno.

“I feel blessed we’ve gotten the weather we have. In Fresno we are out of water,” Conover said. “We should all be thankful; every day there is snow on the ground it’s a good day.”