Holland wins snowboardcross World Cup opener

By Elizabeth Karam, U.S. Snowboarding

Five-time snowboardcross Winter X Games gold medalist Nate Holland of Squaw Valley started the season off with a win in the opening World Cup in Lech Monday night. Holland led a string of four U.S. athletes into the top 15.

Holland, who went into the final rounds seeded fifth, pulled out his fourth career World Cup win along with taking the overall points leader yellow bib for the first time. Holland, having won the first World Cup of the season, will head into Tuesday's race wearing yellow as the overall World Cup points leader.

"This is the first time I've ever had the yellow bib – I'm the points leader," said a tired Holland after clinching the victory under the lights. "Tonight I finally got the yellow bib and hopefully I can hold onto it longer than one night because we are racing tomorrow."

After posting a successful protest in the quarterfinals, Holland put the pedal to the metal topping both the semi final and final rounds. Holland beat out a tough field in the finals edging out Canada's Tom Velisek for the win.

"In the final heat I was in third place in turn one. Everything just started clicking and I started making passes," said Holland of his winning run. "Half way down I passed into first and at that point I knew those guys were behind me and I just pinned it to the finish line."

With conditions superb, Holland took full advantage of the course filled with long straight sections and good turns building confidence for the remainder of the season.

“I’ve always been a confident rider and traditionally within my riding I usually start getting my results mid season – towards the end of the season,” explained Holland. “This last year and this year I’ve been able to start pulling some results earlier in the season and I’m happy with that. I have to contribute a lot of that to my fall training.”

Shaun Palmer of South Lake Tahoe advanced to the semifinals but did not qualify for the final round, finishing sixth, while Jayson Hale of Sierraville was 11th and Jonathon Cheever of Saugus, Mass., 14th, not moving past the quarterfinals round.

In the women’s race, Canada went one-two while U.S. Snowboarding’s Callan Chythlook-Sifsof of Alaskda finished 12th.

There were six USA riders competing in Lech, with the remainder of the team training at a special early season camp in Telluride, Colo., prior to next week’s Visa U.S. Snowboardcross Cup World Cup.

The men and women will be on course again Tuesday for another race in Lech.

Official Results, World Cup, Lech am Arlberg, Austria, Dec. 7, Snowboardcross

Men

1. Nate Holland, Squaw Valley, CA

2. Tom Velisek, Canada

3. Mario Fuchs, Austria

4. Dan Csokonay, Canada

5. David Speiser, Germany

–

6. Shaun Palmer, South Lake Tahoe, CA

11. Jayson Hale, Sierraville, CA

14. Jonathon Cheever, Saugus, MA

–

41. Mick Dierdorff, Steamboat Springs, CO

Women

1. Dominique Maltais, Canada

2. Maelle Ricker, Canada

3. Yuka Fujimori, Japan

4. Deborah Anthoniozz, France

5. Marie Ramberger, Austria

–

12. Callan Chythlook-Sifsof, Girdwood, AK

Garrido's letters offer insight into suspect's thinking

By CBS 13

SACRAMENTO – For the first time ever, a look inside the mind of a woman accused of kidnapping and raping Jaycee Dugard. These letters from Nancy come from a prison pen pal, a woman

who she befriended at the El Dorado County Jail. That pen pal wanted Nancy's story to be told.

At first glace, you'd never know these were words from a prisoner; A friendship that started in the El Dorado County Jail, and continues with Nancy Garrido's pen pal serving a sentence in state prison.



Nancy Garrido

Nancy's love for Phillip and God was a constant theme throughout her letters.

"Phillip sends me Bible studies that I truly enjoy and bring me closer to our God," writes Nancy.

But, it's clear Nancy knows she and Phillip will never reunite on this Earth.

Read the whole story

Vail Resorts post $43 mil. quarterly net loss

By Ed Sealover, Denver Business Journal

Vail Resorts Inc. (NYSE: MTN) Tuesday reported a net loss of

$43 million in the fiscal quarter ending Oct. 31, but it raised its “Resort Reported EBITDA” guidance for the fiscal year to reflect its recent acquisition of a Lake Tahoe ski resort.

The Broomfield-based company typically loses money in the first quarter of each fiscal year, when its four Colorado and two California ski resorts are closed to winter sports, but it must continue paying administrative expenses to year-round employees.

The first-quarter loss for fiscal year 2011, which equalled $1.20 per diluted share, was greater than that of first quarter 2010, which was $41.2 million or $1.14 per diluted share.

On average, analysts had expected a quarterly loss of $1.10 a share, Thomson Reuters reported.

Read the whole story

Truckee residents skeptical of dam safety concerns

By Tom Knudson, Sacramento Bee

TRUCKEE – Amid dark clouds and wind, rain pummels the Sierra Nevada crest outside this quaint resort community. Near the airport, water begins to gush from the base of a big federal dam, undermining its foundation.

Then the earth shudders and the dam gives way, sending a giant wall of water hurtling down Martis Creek and the Truckee River Canyon. Pine trees snap like matchsticks. Bridges are blown

out.

Downstream, Reno turns into an inland sea.

That is the nightmare scenario the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers described at a meeting here last week to discuss the Martis Creek Dam, which the agency calls one of the riskiest in America.

“Frankly, it’s not safe to operate in a normal manner,” said Matt Allen, leader of the corps’ dam safety study team.

Townspeople, though, responded warily, saying they fear the government is inflating the risk to build support for a new dam that would destroy large portions of picturesque Martis Valley.

Read the whole story

Ski report: Barely a cloud in the sky



It’s a glorious day in Lake Tahoe. Time to call in late for work.

Here is the ski report from Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.

Budget gifts: Supporting Tahoe Derby Dames' online auction

Let the Tahoe Derby Dames help you with your gift shopping this season.



Through Dec. 12, Lake Tahoe's only flat track derby league will be hosting its first online holiday auction, featuring a variety of gifts. The auction proceeds will help the Dames cover the cost of renting an indoor practice space this winter, since the outdoor track is under a few feet of snow through the spring.

Registration for the online auction site is free, and auction items can be paid for via major credit card or PayPal.

SLTFD helping provide memorable holiday

To the community,

It's that holiday time of year and the South Lake Tahoe Fire Department would like to encourage everyone to think of those less fortunate members of our community. At all the city fire stations, you can drop off any new or like-new condition used toys into the Christmas Cheer Barrels. Any donations will be gratefully forwarded to needy households this holiday season.



Also, the city fire department will again be handing out candy canes from the decorated fire truck driving throughout the community.

From Dec. 10 through Dec. 24 each night, the holiday truck will make its way through specific sections of the city. Here is the schedule. These scheduled dates will be dependent on the weather, and may be changed due to driving conditions or emergency responses.

South Lake Tahoe firefighters hope to see many of you on our routes this holiday and would like to wish everyone a safe and joyous season.

Sallie Ross-Filgo, SLTFD

Donations for pets being sought

Help the less fortunate this holiday season by supporting the Humane Society of Truckee-Tahoe’s Pet Pantry Program.

The economic downturn continues to affect some Truckee-Tahoe residents and their pets, forcing some families to give up their beloved companions due to financial hardship. To help prevent this, the HSTT has implemented the Pet Pantry Program.

Under the slogan “Give what you can, take what you need,” the nonprofit collects pet food and distributes it to needy families with pets in the Truckee-Tahoe area. Extra pet food

or donations can be dropped off at collection barrels in Truckee at Safeway, Pet Station and Scraps Dog Bakery.

Anyone in need of pet food should contact HSTT at (530) 587.5948.

Birders sought for Tahoe basin eagle count

The U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit is looking for volunteers with or without experience to coordinate the annual Midwinter Bald Eagle Survey on Jan. 7 from 9am until noon.

There are 26 stations located around the Lake Tahoe Basin that need to be filled as soon as possible. Interested participants should respond no later than Dec. 23. For more information, contact Rena Escobedo at (530) 543.2733 or email rescobedo@fs.fed.us.

The count is part of the National Midwinter Bald Eagle Survey that was initiated by the National Wildlife Federation in 1979. The LTBMU is working in conjunction with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which is coordinating efforts in the West this winter. The results of the count will be combined with those from elsewhere in the state and across the nation to generate an index (an indirect measure) of bald eagle populations across the U.S.

Ownership changes launch new era for Tahoe ski resorts

By Rob Sabo, Northern Nevada Business Weekly

The sale of Squaw Valley USA and the purchase of the management contract for Northstar-at-Tahoe represent a continued shift in the ownership and operating structure of major destination ski resorts.



The Lake Tahoe region has been the focus of much investor attention during the past few months, with larger corporations taking a hard look at potential returns from regional ski resorts, many of which have enjoyed a marked increase in annual skier visits.

In late November KSL Capital Partners of Denver purchased Squaw Valley for an undisclosed amount. The resort was founded in 1949 by the late Alex Cushing and owned by his wife, Nancy and a handful of investors.

And the management contract for Northstar, owned by CNL Lifestyle Properties and run by Booth Creek Ski Holdings, was purchased a month earlier by Vail Resorts of Broomfield, Colo. Vail Resorts also owns and operates Heavenly Mountain Resort at Stateline.

Both transactions represent a movement at big ski resorts away from smaller corporate ownership to larger, well-funded companies, says Michael Berry, president of the National Ski Areas Association.

Berry says the age of small families and corporations owning premier destination ski resorts – particularly in California – has all but ended as large and better-funded corporate entities capitalize on the earnings potential of resort

ownership. Corporations own virtually all of the premier resorts in California, Utah and Colorado, he says, primarily because increased lift ticket sales have led to higher revenues.

Read the whole story