Mancuso leads U.S. in giant slalom

By Elizabeth Karam, U.S. Ski Team

ASPEN -– Three-time Olympic medalist Julia Mancuso of Squaw Valley showed she has the speed to return to the Audi FIS Alpine World Cup giant slalom podium finishing eighth Saturday to lead the U.S. at the Visa Aspen Winternational. France's Tessa Worley produced a blistering second run jumping seven spots to make it two Aspen wins in three years.

Sarah Schleper of Vail also bagged some World Cup points with 18th as three-time World Cup overall winner Lindsey Vonn, also of Vail, skied out in the opening run.

An overflowing sunglassed crowd roared as Mancuso rocketed to second in the opening run, just three hundredths of a second behind leader and Olympic gold medalist Viktoria Rebensburg of Germany. A small mistake at the top of the course slowed Mancuso enough to keep her off the Aspen podium, despite making up time through the bottom of the course.

"I remembered from the training session last time that you have to charge down the pitch through all the rolls," said Mancuso, the 2006 Olympic GS champion. "I skied pretty consistent with one small mistake in the middle, but then I really picked it up again toward the finish. All in all it was a good run. It's a fine balance between charging hard and taking it easy to finish."

The tricky Aspen set grabbed Vonn yet again as her skis locked up on the grippy snow and bounced her off course. The Olympic champion immediately turned her focus to Sunday's slalom by heading back onto the snow after the race to train.

"I just went a little too straight today and got a little too

excited and amped up," Vonn said. "I wasn't using the greatest tactics, but that sometimes happens in ski racing. I'm definitely disappointed in today but I'm still optimistic. My training has been going really well both in GS and slalom so I'm just looking forward to the next race and trying to stay positive and keep working hard."

Joining Mancuso in the second run was Schleper, who was laying down a solid run before a minor speed check bounced her coming onto the flats.

"The last three years I've been right around the top-20," said Schleper. "I want to start getting top-15s, top-10s. I want to get back into that routine."

Mancuso left the gate on fire in the second run, before a losing her balance on bump in almost the exact spot as Schleper.

"I had a little problem on top and I felt like I lost my ski," explained Mancuso. "It was hard to get back in mentally. It was something in my head and I backed off."

American's Megan McJames of Park City and Laurenne Ross Klamath Falls failed to qualify for a second run, while Leanne Smith of Conway, N.H., skied off course.

McJames, Ross, Vonn, Schleper and Mancuso will be back in the start Sunday along with Resi Stiegler of Jackson Hole, Wyo., Land Hailey Duke of Boise with slalom. It will be the first start for Stiegler in just more than a year.

Official results, World Cup, Aspen, Nov. 27, Giant Slalom

1. Tessa Worley, France, 2:06.81

2. Viktoria Rebensburg, Germany, 2:06.82

3. Kathrin Hoezl, Germany, 2:06.83

4. Elisabeth Goergl, Austria, 2:06.87

5. Federica Brignone, Austria, 2:07.24

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8. Julia Mancuso, Squaw Valley, 2:07.51

18. Sarah Schleper, Vail, 2:08.80

DNF: Lindsey Vonn, Vail, Leanne Smith (Conway, N.H.)

DNQ: Megan McJames (Park City), Laurenne Ross (Klamath Falls)

Ski report: Storm in Tahoe, wind may be an issue on slopes

With a winter storm warning for the Lake Tahoe Basin until 10 tonight, a day on the slopes may not be the warmest place to be.



Here is the ski report for the day from Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe. Check the resort where you are skiing because it’s possible lifts will be on wind hold.

Cove East loop beckons on wind-whipped afternoon

By Kathryn Reed

One of the best things about living on a street that doesn't get plowed first or even on the same day a storm hits is the ability to cross country ski on it.

Heading to Cove East last Sunday we knew it could be a bit treacherous before we got to this oasis owned by the California Tahoe Conservancy. No worries. We made it to the entrance at the end of Venice Drive by testing our balance on road ice and chunky snow banks.



A cold, stormy day at Cove East. Photos/Kathryn Reed

No one was there. Solitude and silence except for the honking of geese who didn't get the message to head south and crows that saw us struggling to break trail.

At first it seemed like this popular 2-mile or so loop on state land would be fairly easy on cross country skis because someone had been there before us with boots.

Gray skies hovered above as snow danced in the air to a song

the wind was singing. It was beautiful and a bit ominous at the same time.

Traipsing along the Upper Truckee River the water didn't seem to be moving. The edges are frozen and it is only November.

Mother Nature seems to be laughing at us as we keep our heads down to ward off the chill.

Reaching the beach, Lake Tahoe doesn't look like herself. It could be any other unimpressive body of water. It's dark. The surrounding mountains are not visible. It's a bit eerie.

Bootprints lead to the water. I don't want to go there. I break trail and sink. I head toward the loop to circle around. This isn't fun anymore and I make my irritation known. Why am I on skis instead of snowshoes? This would be pleasurable on snowshoes.

I lead us across the open space, making it a shorter loop so there will be less time for me to whine.

The tracks resume. Finally. Still not gliding much, but breaking trail is over.

The trek becomes more pleasurable. It sure beats going to the gym.

Getting to Cove East:

In South Lake Tahoe near the Y, turn on Tahoe Keys Boulevard.

Go right at the stop sign on Venice Drive.

Go the end – park in the circular area if the roads are cleared, otherwise park in the lot to the left for the marina and Fresh Ketch.

Enter the path. It loops around.

Dogs on leash are welcome. Bring a bag or use one of the ones

provided.

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Study: Billions more from tourism, fishing than oil

By Jennifer Dlouhy, Houston Chronicle

WASHINGTON – An environmental advocacy group says tourism and fishing deliver $204 billion annually to coastal economies along the Pacific, Atlantic and Florida Gulf shores – about four times the value of the estimated oil and gas that could be recovered every year from proposed offshore drilling nearby.

The study, prepared by Environment America, boils down the fierce and emotional fight over offshore drilling into a dollar-based analysis.

Michael Gravitz, the report's author, contends the numbers show that "the potential returns from offshore drilling are not worth the risk" of another oil spill that could contaminate reefs near Florida and salmon-rich Pacific waters.

"Our research makes it clear that clean beaches and oceans are worth much more than drilling for the last drops of oil off our coasts," Gravitz added.

Oil and gas industry leaders have argued that the value of the actual commodities that can be extracted only shows part of the picture – and overlooks the added spending tied to offshore drilling activities, from the salaries of rig workers in Louisiana and Texas to the pipes built in Rust Belt

manufacturing plants.

Read the whole story

How green is your ski equipment?

By Rachel Harris, Ski

How sustainable is that sweet pair of skis you're about to buy? You may soon be able to find out how green all your favorite products are through a new tool called the Eco Index. Designed in collaboration with over one hundred retailers, brands, and suppliers, along with the Outdoor Industry Association, the European Outdoor Group, and Zero Waste Alliance, the Eco Index is an environmental assessment tool designed to advance sustainable practices within the outdoor industry.



The Eco Index is based on a framework created to guide product development. Developers assess where their materials came from and how they were processed along with packaging, product manufacturing and assembly, transport and distribution, use and service, and finally end of life. After assessment, the Eco Index scores a product on a 119-point scale. "There is a lot of green-washing going on right now because everyone has their own standards," said Beth Jensen, Corporate Responsibility Manager at OIA. "This will hopefully provide a way to measure products against a standard so that companies can make more informed product lifecycle decisions."

Read the whole story

Book delves into Cash’s lyric about Reno

By Susan Skorupa, Reno Gazette-Journal

The reaction usually started with the opening notes of the song, eight dark tones leading up to the first line of lyric.

Johnny Cash’s audiences waited for it – the second verse of “Folsom Prison Blues,” the line “but I shot a man in Reno just to watch him die.” He’d sing it, they’d hoot or bay like coyotes and clap until their hands hurt.



Johnny Cash

Northern Nevada audiences took it very personally. They’d wait. They’d hold their breath. He’d sing the line. They’d just go nuts, stomping and shouting. In 1995, Cash told a Reno Gazette-Journal reporter that on the stage he could feel the audience anticipation, feel it build from the opening chords.

Caleb Cage has taken the line personally, too.

Cage was a child in Reno when he first heard “Folsom Prison Blues” and was enraptured by the song’s Reno connection – the

“Reno line.”

Read the whole story

Christmas tree lot wouldn’t be the same without Benny

By Kathryn Reed

Choosing the perfect Christmas tree is important. Sometimes it takes the right person to find the right tree.

For many people, Benny Kunibe is that person.

Kunibe, who turned 93 this month, is the man behind the Optimist’s annual Christmas tree lot near El Dorado Beach.



Benny Kunibe

“People will come to the tree lot and only want to talk to Benny to get the best tree,” said Terry Powers, a fellow Optimist.

The tree lot has been an institution in South Lake Tahoe since 1963. The club had to find some way to raise money after taking a huge financial loss with a car race that was supposed to raise money but instead created a deficit of thousands of

dollars and required lawyers to get out of the mess.

The lot was first at the old Nevada Lumber Company, where CVS at the Y is. Only local trees were sold. Many came from the Wrights Lake area. At the time it was the only tree lot in town.

The Optimist has sold trees up and down Highway 50, including in Nevada, and inside the Fremont Center when it was a dance hall. The lot has been in its current location since the early 1990s.

Although there are other places to buy trees on the South Shore that are less expensive, the Optimist lot is the only one to give money back to the community.

“This is the only big money maker we have. It’s how we give money to the kids,” Kunibe said.

The Optimist Club is all about raising money for various youth groups in the area. At the club’s meeting on Nov. 17 there is discussion about a request from the Pop Warner Cheer group needing money. (It’s mostly men in attendance upstairs at Steamers.) They talk about how at times there are as many young girls cheering on the sidelines as there are boys playing football. The cheerleaders are getting their money.

It’s a business meeting with levity. Kunibe has what looks like a Clorox bottle turned into a decorated pig where fines are paid into the back end. He is getting people to put in money for infractions that aren’t entirely evident to the uninitiated.

“The guys keep me young,” Kunibe said.

But the guys wonder what they would do without their senior most member – in terms of age and membership.

“Benny remembers all the supplies we need,” Powers said.

This means shopping after the holidays for deals on things like tree stands that will be used the following year. It means knowing how many hot dogs or packets of hot cocoa to have for various events.

Kunibe has had an interesting life, though not always easy. During World War II he was placed in an internment camp in Colorado. In 1955, he moved to Lake Tahoe from Sacramento.

He started off working at George’s Basque restaurant. He worked for a time at the old Lampson Store. Kunibe lived behind the store in a 600-square-foot house with his wife and four kids.

When Fritz Wenck joined Optimist in 1970, Kunibe was still sprinting around the bases for the club’s softball team.

Baseball is very much a love of Kunibe’s to this day. He’s wearing a San Francisco Giants hat and lights up when questioned about this year’s team.

“They made history,” he says of the World Series champs. Still, though, it’s Willie Mays who he has a soft spot for.

When Kunibe isn’t doing something for the Optimist Club he can be found fishing on Fallen Leaf or Topaz lakes.

“Age doesn’t mean a thing. I don’t sit around,” Kunibe said.

He definitely won’t be sitting much for the next few weeks as the Optimist Club sells Christmas trees. The lot opened Friday. It is open weekdays noon-8pm and weekends 10am-8pm. Snow can change the hours up a bit.

“Benny enjoys life and he wants to make sure everyone else does,” Powers said.

What’s a great gift for $20 or less?

Shop – it’s a four letter word in a super negative way for so many people this time of year.

With the economy being what it is, household incomes such as they are and the pressure to buy, buy, buy this time of year, let’s help each other out.



Twenty dollars. What if that were the maximum amount you could spend on a gift? What would you buy? What would you make? What would you sell someone?

Send your suggestions to **info@LakeTahoeNews.net**. Put “holiday” in the subject line. Suggest ideas to other readers about what $20 or less can buy, who it might be good for if that’s not obvious, where to buy it, how to make it. Make the ideas as Lake Tahoe or Sierra Nevada oriented as possible. If you have a picture of the item, the store, yourself, then send it along as a jpeg. Include your name and contact information in case we have questions. If you are OK with your name being credited with the suggestion, indicate it’s fine to publish it. Your phone number and/or email address will not be published.

Keep what you write to 150 words or so.

Keep the ideas family friendly and legal.

Lake Tahoe News reserves the right not to print all of the suggestions and to edit them.

Reno, Washoe County consider consolidating services

By Tammy Krikorian, Reno Gazette-Journal

The city of Reno and Washoe County are seeking residents' input on whether the two local governments should combine services in information technology, human resources and purchasing.

Washoe County and Reno already share dozens of services through inter-local agreements, memorandums of understanding and consolidation.

The county, Reno, Sparks and Washoe County School District created a committee to study ways to share services. The first project focused on sharing IT, HR and purchasing. After a staff analysis, Washoe County and Reno decided to move forward and hired Matrix Consulting Group to analyze the feasibility of combining the services in a way that would improve service and save money.

Read the whole story

Win at Harveys secures seat at WSOP in Vegas

By Tom Travis, 777 Poker

Poker player Stanley Quinn has become the latest star to pick up a coveted World Series of Poker (WSOP) gold ring by winning the circuit’s main event at Harvey’s resort in Lake Tahoe.

The 51-year-old, who previously worked in IT before taking up the card game, takes home $86,789 (£55,076) as a reward for his triumph and is also guaranteed a seat at the WSOP Circuit National Championship in Las Vegas next May.

Arguably the highlight of Quinn’s career prior to this victory was a 549th-place finish at this year’s WSOP Main Event, which allowed him to cash in on the biggest stage.

Read the whole story