U.S. Ski Team bibs raise $90,000 for Haiti

By USSA

PARK CITY -â€“ Final tallies revealed Tuesday that the alpine athlete race bibs from the 70th Hahnenkamm men's downhill in Kitzbuehel, Austria and the women's super G in Cortina d'Ampezzo, Italy raised over $90,000 in online auctions for the earthquake relief effort in Haiti.

The highest earner was Hahnenkamm winner Didier Cuche of Switzerland, whose signed bib was purchased for $16,209. Bode Miller (Franconia, NH) earned top dollar amongst Americans with $2,504 raised for Haiti for his bib. Ted Ligety's (Park City, UT) bib also did well going for $1075.

Newly named 2010 World Cup super G champion Lindsey Vonn (Vail, CO) claimed the top spot amongst women's bibs closing out at just over $4,000. Julia Mancuso (Olympic Valley, CA), who spearheaded the project for the women's World Cup tour, reported that half of the bibs where purchased by fans from the United States with the other half spread across Austria, Italy, Germany, Belgium, France and Switzerland with all the proceeds going to the American Red Cross.

LT Democratic Club meeting

Chief (ret.) Stan Perez will join the Lake Tahoe Democratic Club on Feb. 10 to discuss his candidacy for sheriff of El Dorado County and the upcoming June primary.

Monthly meetings are the second Wednesday of each month at 6:30pm in the Loft above the Blue Angel Cafe, 1132 Ski Run Blvd., South Lake Tahoe.

Everyone is welcome.

www.laketahoedems.org

Sky Tavern Ski Lodge founder dies

By Siobhan McAndrew, Reno Gazette-Journal

Everyone thought Keston Ramsey was going to live forever.

His wife of 80 years, his two sons, six grandchildren, 12 great-grandchildren, neighbors and friends who saw the 101-year-old man shoveling snow and fixing his roof never expected life without Ramsey.

Ramsey, who opened the Sky Tavern Ski Lodge in 1945 with hopes of making it a celebrity skiing hot spot, died Thursday night after being admitted Wednesday to Renown South Meadows Regional Medical Center. He was among the first residential home builders in the area.

Read the whole story

Lake Tahoe ski report, Feb. 2



Punxsutawney Phil saw his shadow – six more weeks of winter. Here is the ski report from Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.

Steep, slick runs test non-Olympian's prowess

By Susan Wood

WHISTLER, British Columbia – Standing at the gate in a crouched position with my skis together, I heard the beeping of the warning clock signaling the start of my Olympic run.

The sound was in my head, no medals were at stake, but the run is the same one the Olympians will conquer this month.



Susan Wood dreams of gold. Photos/Kathryn Reed

I was taken aback with the adrenaline rush as I launched off

one of the many Whistler rollers on the Dave Murray Downhill run, the men's official 3.1km course for the 2010 Winter Games starting in 10 days. The men's and women's downhill runs, along with the super G and giant slalom courses on the lower ends, will be at Whistler Blackcomb Ski Resort's Creekside area.

The run was named after local skier Dave Murray, who as a member of the "Crazy Canucks" was ranked third in the world in downhill racing in 1979. The following year, he placed 10th in the Olympic Games at Lake Placid, N.Y., before retiring two years later to run his home resort's ski school.

His 22-year-old daughter, Julia, will follow in her father's footsteps by competing in the women's skiercross during this year's Winter Games. She was almost 2 years old when he died of cancer in 1990.

"He's our resident hero," Whistler mountain host Evelyn Coggins told her tour group at the start of the downhill run.

The run was named in his honor two decades ago. A sign is near the top explaining who Murray was and a bit about how fast the Olympians are likely to fly down the route.

As Whistler realizes its 50-year dream to host the Winter Olympics, Murray's spirit lives on to grace the nerves of steel in the likes of Lake Tahoe's downhiller Marco Sullivan and U.S. veteran racer Bode Miller, among others.

As my Atomics scratched and scraped across the hard-packed slope on my recent visit to Whistler to preview the venues, I heard another sound. It was the voice of Tahoe orthopedic surgeon Terry Orr, who is headed north to support the athletes of the U.S. Ski Team for the third time.

"It's a windy course, and fast – not one you can just look at from top to bottom," he warned, with a wink and a nod of good luck to Sullivan.

I discovered firsthand it's steep – like much of Whistler's "great-to-be-alive-if-you-love-to-ski"runs. The drops are certainly memorable. If I had a mirror attached to my ski helmet, my look of intensity may have scared me, but I was told later I was giddy as a child.

I thrive on the steeps, so I felt right at home in the terrain known for the longest elevation drop in North America – more than 5,000 feet. Only Zermatt's 8-mile run in Switzerland beats it.

The various pitches of the Dave Murray Downhill have names like the Weasel, Afterburner – which is more like a ledge, Lower Insanity, the recently widened Coaches Corner, the short Boyd's Bump, Murray's Jump aka Hot Air, and the infamous Toilet Bowl – where an abrupt rolling hill goes into a steep pitch in which racers will need to make a 90-degree left turn off what looks like a 45-degree drop.

Coggins' group stood staring at the run at the base of the turn in awe.

"How can they do that?"I heard a few times.

I can't wait to watch the Olympians pull it off while sitting in the comfort of my living room.

Coggins, a Halifax, Nova Scotia, native who labels what some call icy surfaces as "hard pack," said the Toilet Bowl got its name because that's where all the "crud collects because, yes, it rolls down hill."

Whistler Blackcomb kept the Dave Murray Downhill and the women's downhill – located on Franz's run – open to the public until Jan. 25. Lower Dave Murray, even when groomed, remains a black run.

The BC trip was complete after whizzing down the two courses as if my last name were Mancuso and Sullivan of Squaw or Vonn

of Vail. Well, it wasn’t exactly at Olympic speed.

“People have been so excited. There is a buzz. Now you can sit and watch at home and say ‘I skied that’,” Coggins said on the tour. “It’s amazing the speeds they go.”

Think of a finely-tuned Porsche, and now throttle it.

Much of Coggins’ focus of her tour involved doing different variations of the men’s downhill run, which can be accessed via the Garbanzo Express chairlift or the Whistler Village Gondola to the mid-station. Skiers and boarders from the Creekside area may take the Creekside Gondola to the Big Red Express to Upper Whiskey Jack, a run named after a colorful and resourceful scavenger bird that hangs out at the lodges.

The women’s downhill starts along the fall line of the Franz’s chairlift. It’s named after Franz Wilhelmsen, one of the founders of Garibaldi Lift Company and Whistler Mountain. Fast and furious is how best to describe skiing the women’s downhill, which as Coggins put it, comes with its own set of technical challenges.

Lindsey Vonn’s no-guts, no-glory style and Julia Mancuso’s grace-under-pressure demeanor may thrive in this setting. The run is steep and the terrain fast. The best set of edges may prompt some skiers to slide.

With an average of 2 million skier visits under its belt, Whistler’s record-setting 30-plus feet of snow this season bodes well for the host of this world event designed for spectator and participant. At least 90 percent of the dual-mountain terrain will be open for riders throughout the Olympics.

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Winter RVing in the Sierra Nevada

MotorHome

When winter snows blanket the Sierra, most campgrounds and RV parks shut down. But there are a handful of parks that stay open throughout the winter in an effort to accommodate cross country skiers, snowshoers, downhill skiers, snowboarders and snowmobile enthusiasts.

â€œWe put our water lines down deep enough so they donâ€™t freeze,â€ said Wally Walker, manager of the 44-site Eagle Ridge RV Park in Graeagle. The park, located at the 4,600-foot level near a remote winter recreation area in the northern Sierra, provides its guests with electricity, cable TV, sewer and campsite snow removal services as well as information on nearby winter recreation activities.

Read the whole story

Snippets about Lake Tahoe

Douglas County School Districtâ€™s next Superintendent Public Forum is Feb. 3 at Whittell High School at 6:30 pm.

Lake of the Sky Garden Club in Incline Village has money for community related garden projects. Call Lorrie Moore at (530) 587.6980 or email her at lorriemoore@att.net to obtain an application. Apps are due April 15.

Nevada came in 50th for the quality of its K-12 system, according to *Education Week* magazine. Nevada is 48th in the country when it comes to education spending.

Avalanche dogs from Squaw Valley are headed to the Vancouver Olympics.

4 Seasons Soup and Salad Cafe is opening Feb. 8 in South Lake Tahoe on Highway 50 where Wide Awake Conscious CafÃ© was.

South Lake Tahoe US Bank branch recently gave $7,500 to the Tahoe Tallac Association. In 2009, TTA received more than $13,000 in support from US Bank.

Controlled burns on North and East shores

U.S. Forest Service fuels management crews will conduct prescribed fire operations on the North and East shores of Lake Tahoe beginning Feb. 2 as weather and staffing allow. The operations are not expected to last more than one day and will take place on two small units, one located in the Roundhill Pines Resort and the other in the Kings Beach area.

Residents and travelers can expect to see smoke from prescribed fire project areas.

Other fire protection agencies, state and local, may also be conducting prescribed fire operations during this period.

Women’s Winter Day Tour

Womenâ€™s Winter Day Tour at Hope Valley Outdoors is Feb. 6.

Itâ€™s a chance to celebrate women, winter and chocolate. Itâ€™s also a fundraiser to fight domestic violence.

Times:

10am registration at the yurt

10:30am mini lesson

11:00am demo different equipment

1pm main tour event.

Cost is $25, with $15 going directly to South Lake Tahoe Womenâ€™s Center. Cash or checks only.

Hope Valley Outdoors is at the junction of highways 88 and 89, south of South Lake Tahoe.

Senior ski clinic at Sugar Bowl

Designed for skiers and boarders age 55 and over, Sugar Bowl

Ski Resort hosts the Seniorâ€™s All Mountain Adventure Camp Feb. 9-11.

Participants use modern contemporary ski techniques to improve mechanics and subsequently reduce fatigue.

Cost is $225/person.