Caution: Sierra lakes not solid ice

By Cathy Locke, Sacramento Bee

El Dorado Irrigation District officials caution wintertime visitors to be careful if they venture onto the ice at Echo, Silver or Caples lakes.

The district's winter drawdown of the lakes is in effect, which means water levels under the ice will fluctuate, creating potentially dangerous conditions.

Read the whole story

Red Hawk Casino no burden to law enforcement

By Cathy Locke, Sacramento Bee

Red Hawk Casino opened a year ago on the Shingle Springs Rancheria amid dire predictions that it would produce gridlock on Highway 50 and cause crime to soar in El Dorado County.

But as the casino celebrated its first anniversary last week, law enforcement and emergency services officials gave the operation high marks, saying it has not unduly burdened their agencies but rather has resulted in the expected number of calls for service.

"It's pretty much in line with what I envisioned," said Sgt. Joe Sherry with the California Highway Patrol's Placerville

office. “I thought there would have been more weekend traffic.”

Read the whole story

Tahoe’s Bahrke 3rd, Kashima 5th at Olympic Trials

By Lindsey Sine, USSA

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS – The snow falling on Steamboat’s Voo Doo run couldn’t hold back World Champion Patrick Deneen (Cle Elum, WA) and World Cup moguls champion Hannah Kearney (Norwich, VT) on Wednesday as each won Olympic Trials, securing a nomination to the U.S. Olympic Team in the moguls discipline.

“This is the only golden ticket, and to have it means the world to me,” Kearney said. “It felt like a winning run when I crossed the finish line.”

Though it was nearly whiteout conditions into the final run of competition, Kearney nailed a back layout and flat helicopter, combined with an extremely clean run for the win.

“It may have been slower than some of the other competitors, but it was clean and I still skied aggressively,” Kearney said. “There was no way I was going to lose by skiing too conservatively. I pushed it and I am really pleased.”

According to the World Championship bronze medalist, having secured a spot on the Olympic team will enable her to relax, as well as push herself further in the sport to get to where she wants to be in Vancouver – the top of the podium.

“It’s going to make the rest of the year less stressful, and to go into the Olympics as un-stressed as possible is going to give me an advantage,” Kearney said. “I’m going there to win a gold medal. I’m not going there to ‘experience it.’ I already did experience it and there’s a lot of things I’m going to do differently for a much better result.”

Kearney was followed in second by Colorado native Emiko Torito (Denver) who, although disappointed in not winning, was happy with her progress and where she is headed this season.

Like Kearney, Deneen also noted that the weight off his shoulders thanks to the win will be beneficial to him in the coming months.

Right on Deneen’s tail was U.S. Ski Team newcomer Jeremy Cota (Carrabassett Valley, ME) who had the crowd on their toes for a darkhorse victory as he sat in the lead until Deneen’s final run.

“That’s freestyle skiing for you, a lot of close calls. I skied as well as I could and I am definitely happy with that,” Cota said. It’s a little heartbreaking, but I’ll get over it. I was happy to be there. I skied really well and I was obviously in there somewhere and I’m happy with that.”

With three of the five Olympic team spots already nominated, two more remain to be given out Thursday when men’s and women’s aerials take over the action on Voo Doo run.

Steamboat Springs, CO – Dec. 23, Moguls

Men

1. Patrick Deneen, Cle Elum, WA, 26.68

2. Jeremy Cota, Cle Elum, WA, 26.11

3. Holt Haga, Boise, ID, 26.06

4. Shane Cordeau, Sun Valley, ID, 25.92

5. Sho Kashima, South Lake Tahoe, CA, 25.90

6. Jimmy Discoe, Ridgway, CO, 25.81

7. Dave DiGravio, Farmington, ME, 25.53

8. Michael Morse, Duxbury, MA, 25.39

9. David Babic, Washington, VT, 24.88

10. Joe Discoe, Ridgway, CO, 24.86

Women

1. Hannah Kearney, Norwich, VT, 26.30

2. Emiko Torito, Denver, 25.96

3. Shannon Bahrke, Tahoe City, CA, 25.37

4. Michelle Roark, Denver, 25.34

5. Shelley Robertson, Reno, NV, 24.58

6. Heather McPhie, Park City, UT, 24.09

7. Eliza Outtrim, Steamboat Springs, CO, 23.56

8. Heidi Kloser, Vail, CO, 23.28

9. Laurel Shanley, Squaw Valley, CA, 23.15

10. Mikaela Matthews, Frisco, CO, 13.11

Limited hours at Cave Rock on Dec. 25

The boat launch facility at Cave Rock will be open from 6-11am on Christmas Day.

The hours are because of holiday staff reductions in the Tahoe Regional Planning Agencyâ€™s watercraft inspection program. Watercraft inspectors are provided by the Tahoe Resource Conservation District and are important in protecting Lake Tahoe from the threat of aquatic invasive species such as quagga and zebra mussels.

Boaters launching on this day must be off the water prior to 11am. For information, contact Jay Howard at (775) 831.0494, ext. 229.

Attorney dispute in Garrido case not resolved

By Sam Stanton, Sacramento Bee

The dispute over who will represent Nancy Garrido in the Jaycee Lee Dugard kidnapping trial is not settled yet, with an appellate court agreeing Tuesday to extend its deadline for a final decision.

El Dorado Superior Court Judge Douglas Phimister had removed court-appointed attorney Gilbert Maines from representing her, apparently over claims that Maines had talked of writing a book on the case.

Read the whole story

Female ski jumpers lose battle to compete in Vancouver



Wendy Stueck, Globe and Mail

In the end, they couldn’t fly far enough.

A group of determined female ski jumpers that launched a landmark legal battle for the right to compete in the 2010 Olympic Games yesterday landed short, their dreams ended by the Supreme Court of Canada’s refusal to hear an appeal of lower-court rulings that dismissed their case. For the group, comprising young women who long for nothing more than to soar through the air from an Olympic-sanctioned ramp, the decision came as a bitter, if not unexpected, disappointment.

“It’s kind of hard to believe that it’s the end. It’s still settling in,” Meaghan Reid, a 16-year-old who is one of the plaintiffs in the case, said yesterday from her home in Calgary. “We’ve worked for so long and so hard that we’re not going to give up until we get into the Olympics. But legally, for 2010, we’re done.”

Read the whole story

3.7 quake rattles North Shore

A few people in the North Tahoe-Truckee-Reno area were jostled by a minor earthquake Tuesday night.

The 3.7 temblor was recorded at 9:59pm about six miles from Incline Village, according to the UNR Seismological Lab.

Lake Tahoe ski report, Dec. 23



Bundle up because the morning is starting off with single digits. Here is the ski report brought to you by Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.

Olympics on the line today for mogul maestros

Tom Kelly, USSA

STEAMBOAT SPRINGS – There was a nervous air at the top of Voo Doo on Tuesday as some of the best moguls skiers in the world came to the start to try their stuff on the bump run that could determine the fate of the U.S. Olympic Team 24 hours

later. It will be winner-take-all battle Wednesday afternoon with a single Olympic berth on the line.

Skiers had a two-hour block Tuesday to take practice runs, working on their air packages and getting used to the massive bumps.

“It’s a skier’s course,” said Coach Todd Schirman. “The bumps are big and beefy, and the transitions [to the jumps] really quick.”

The Olympic Trials will determine one team member per discipline and gender. The remainder of the Team, up to four in each event, will be announced January 26 after the remaining five World Cup events.

It was a nervous, pensive scene at the top of Voo Doo Tuesday. Just down from the top on skier’s right, Michelle Roark (Denver) focused and visualized before finally hitting the top air. World Champion Patrick Deneen (Cle Elum, WA) was in his own zone, thinking about what he needed to do to guarantee his spot on the 2010 Olympic Team. Despite a win and a third in her back pocket already, World Cup champion Hannah Kearney (Norwich, VT) was her typical intense self as she mapped out her run.

Skier after skier came to the top, checked in with coaches on the radio, and ripped runs down the massive bump run.

When the competition kicks off on Wednesday, all eyes will be on Bryon Wilson (Butte, MT), a relative unknown who was a late entry into the opening World Cups in Finland where he scored two second place finishes. While Wilson is the clear leader after the opening World Cup weekend, he would love to confirm his spot on Voo Doo.

“The course is rippin’ today,” said Wilson. The bumps are good, the jumps are good and we’ll see what happens tomorrow.”

What does the top-ranked American on the World Cup think it will it take to win: “Go fast, go big and just lay down a smokin’ run.”

Wilson is just one member of a well-stacked men’s moguls team with a dozen others ready to take the spot. Among the notables is Deneen, who took the worlds title last year in Japan but was shutout in the Finnish opener. Add to the mix 2005 World Champ Nate Roberts (Park City, UT), returning from an injury and striking the podium in Finland and ready to challenge for a first Olympic spot. And that’s just the beginning. And don’t count out the likes of Michael Morse (Duxbury, MA), Sho Kashima (S. Lake Tahoe, CA), David Babic (Washington, VT) and more.

It isn’t any easier on the women’s side, where Kearney has been the clear front-runner. But a host of others are waiting in the wings to take the spot including Roark, 2002 silver medalist Shannon Bahrke (S. Lake Tahoe, CA) local favorite Emiko Torito (Denver), veteran Shelly Robertson (Reno, NV) and Steamboat’s own Eliza Outtrim who is off to a good start.

Historically, the Olympic Trials have produced winners from among the favorites. But this year’s field is so packed with talent that it’s truly anyone’s ballgame. If a dark horse emerges and wins, it could change the complexion of Olympic qualifying in the remaining five World Cups, including January stops at Deer Valley Resort in Park City, UT and Lake Placid, NY.

Moguls kicks off with the introductory showcase of athletes at 12:45pm, followed by first run at 1pm. and second run at 2pm. Awards in Goldola Square begin at 3:30pm. followed by Big Head Todd and the Monsters.

Anderson out of Olympic contention

Lake Tahoe has one less Olympic hopeful.

Joanie Anderson, who skis for Sierra-at-Tahoe, will not be competing in the next three World Cup races, which are qualifiers for the Vancouver Winter Games.



Joanie Anderson

“I’ll be racing in X Games at the end of January, and that’s about it for boardercross,” Anderson said in an email to *Lake Tahoe News*.