Weather advisory issued for Lake Tahoe

Publisher's note: ***Updated as of 7:29am Dec. 21.***

A winter weather advisory for Lake Tahoe has been issued by the National Weather Service from 10am Monday to 9am Tuesday.

Snow is expected to begin falling Monday morning and is likely to get heavier as the day progresses.



Dark skies on Dec. 20 in Washoe Meadow State Park along the Upper Truckee River. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Four to 8 inches could fall at the lake, with 6 to 12 inches above 7,000 feet.

Snow is expected to drop to 5,500 feet.

U.S. snowboardercross teams medal

By Tom Kelly, USSA

TELLURIDE – It was a hot day Sunday on the SBX course for the U.S. as Lindsey Jacobellis (Stratton, VT) and Faye Gulini (Salt Lake City) took first, and Nate Holland (Squaw Valley, CA) and Nick Baumgartner (Iron River, MI) second at the Visa Snowboardcross Cup team SBX event in Telluride.

In the team SBX format, national teams of two race each other. Four racers go down the course and once they cross the finish line, a sensor drops the gate of their teammate and the racing ensues till the first athlete crosses the finish line.

The Olympic silver medalist Jacobellis, who aced each of her heats, was teamed up with newcomer Gulini who, at just 17, was able to hold off world-class competitors for the Team win.

“I was so proud of her. She was riding so well down the whole course. She definitely nailed it and that’s what it’s going to take to hold off the Canadians,” Jacobellis said of Gulini. “It’s amazing as a rider to see her develop at such a young age.”

As for the women’s strategy – Jacobellis led for the holeshot and Gulini made sure the gap never got closed.

“I have a weaker pull, so having Lindsey go first to give me that holeshot definitely made a huge difference,” Gulini said.

Jacobellis and Gulini were followed in second by Canadians Maelle Ricker and Dominique Maltais and Switzerland’s Simona Meiler and Tanja Frieden were third.

The men’s team races were all intense with little room for first and second lap mistakes. In the end, the French team of

Xavier De Le Rue and Pierre Vaultier took first, followed in a painstakingly close second by Holland and Baumgartner.

“Today was a blast. I knew I had three good races in me. Baumgartner did a great job getting me out of the gate in either first or second,” Holland said. “It’s pretty cool, this team event. I was Baumgartner’s biggest fan today. I’d watch him go out of the gate, root for him as much as I could, and then it was time for me to put up my end of the bargain.”

According to Baumgartner, the team format is exciting because of the reliance on teammates to do well, and the two run chance to win the event.

“I dig it. Everyone knows we have the U.S. team, but it’s mainly an individual sport. It’s a different bond you get when you start to rely on each other,” Baumgartner said. “He’s my biggest fan when I go out of the gate and when I finish down here, I’m screaming for him. It makes you closer, tighter and makes for great racing.”

Ross “The Boss” Powers (Okemo, VT) and his team SBX comrade Graham Watanabe (Sun Valley, ID) were also poised to make the final with Powers winning each of the first runs and Watanabe keeping the lead. But, in the semi final round after Powers crossed the finish line first, Watanabe’s start was a little too strong.

“I got a little too jazzed in the start and made an early move over a tall roller – but it was too early and I got bucked off balance. I had to hike up over a feature. I made up time, but not enough,” Watanabe said.

But, all in all, Powers, who was third in the SBX World Cup Saturday, enjoyed the racing regardless of the finish.

“I feel better and better every day, and today’s team race was a lot of fun. It was cool for me to be out there with Graham having a good time,” Powers said. “Just to go out there and

win each one of my heats was huge. I can leave here with great confidence, enjoy the holidays, and go to Europe strong and try to make this team.”

The snowboardcross athletes now have a break before heading to Bad Gastein, Austria, Jan. 9-11.

2010 Visa Snowboardcross Cup, Dec. 20, Team SBX

Men

1. France 2 (De La Rue, Vaultier)

2. USA 2 (Holland, Baumgartner)

3. Canada1 (Robertson, Nielson)

4. Austria (Schairer, Fuchs)

5. USA 2 (Watanabe, Powers)

Women

1. USA 1 (Jacobellis, Gulini)

2. Canada (Ricker; Maltais)

3. Switzerland 1 (Frieden, Meiler)

4. Switzerland 2 (Francon, Aubry)

5. Japan (Doi, Kuwashima)

—

7. USA2 (Chythlook-Sifsof, Yamada)

Mt. Rose’s new lodge opens Dec. 21

Winters Creek Lodge at Mount Rose ski resort opens Dec. 21, the first day of winter.

The building includes a food court, Sky Bar and restrooms. The hours of operation for the Winters Creek Lodge are 7:30am-6pm.

The Sky Bar opens at 10am.

Winters Creek Lodge has a no cooler policy inside, but you can use them on the deck.

Reno’s Jitloff snags gate, disqualifies in GS

By Matthew Piper, USSA

ALTA BADIA, Italy -â€“ The U.S. had to put its podium hopes on ice Sunday as Ted Ligety (Park City, UT) finished seventh in sub-zero conditions at the Audi FIS Alpine World Cup giant slalom in Alta Badia, Italy.

On a sun-soaked morning at the infamous Gran Risa slope, Ligety struggled to get a hold on his first run and fell well behind the pace of eventual winner Massimiliano Blardone of the host nation.

“This hill is really tough this year, it’s so icy,” Ligety said. “First run, I think a lot of guys were taken by surprise by how icy it was. I for sure was one guy. I just felt like I

had no grip on the top.”

Blardone and compatriot Davide Simoncelli were 1-2 for the Italians after one run, and they finished the day in the same order.

Twenty-year-old Tommy Ford (Bend, OR) impressed with 24th place in just his fourth World Cup event. Ford was able to put aside his butterflies for a clutch second run after qualifying for the first final of his World Cup career.

Ford’s finish in the top 30 at the prestigious course gains the U.S. another World Cup starting spot for GS, making six.

Ligety and Ford may have stayed alive for the second run Sunday, but it was Tim Jitloff (Reno, NV) who would have had the U.S. teamâ€™s best early run â€“ were it not for the final gate.

“Just wanted to get across the line and next thing you know, I was crashing,” Jitloff said. “I felt my leg kind of get torn apart there.”

Despite having just one top-20 World Cup finish to his name, Jitloffâ€™s time would have led the Americans with a tie for ninth place in 1:20.11, but he came tumbling through the finish after clipping the last gate with his left ski and lay against the fence clutching his leg.

Jitloff eventually rose to his feet and gave the Italian fans a bow, drawing an ovation despite his pending disqualification.

“I stood up and they started clapping like you would at a soccer match or something like that, and so I figured Iâ€™d say thank you to them, because these guys are amazing fans,” he said. “Every year, thereâ€™s 20,000-strong usually that are really excited.

“It was a great run, Iâ€™m really satisfied,” Jitloff added.

“Especially with the kind of difficulties that Iâ€™ve been struggling with in the early season here.”

Bode Miller (Franconia, NH), with six top-10 finishes this season, began the day 12th in the standings and lost control early before recovering to finish well back in a first-round 32nd.

The U.S. will return to the podium hunt in the slalom Monday. Slalom starters are Ligety, Miller, Jitloff, Jimmy Cochran (Keene, NH) and World Cup first-timer David Chodounsky (Crested Butte, CO).

Alta Badia, Italy, Dec. 20, Menâ€™s Giant Slalom

1. Massimiliano Blardone, Italy, 2:35.76

2. Davide Simoncelli, Italy, 2:39.19

3. Cyprien Richard, France, 2:37.39

4. Benjamin Raich, Austria, 2:37.46

5. Manfred Moelgg, Italy, 2:37.72

–

7. Ted Ligety, Park City, UT, 2:37.77

24. Tommy Ford, Bend, OR, 2:40.79

DNQ – Bode Miller, Franconia, NH

DNF – Jake Zamansky, Aspen, CO

DQ – Tim Jitloff, Reno, NV

Vonn podiums; Mancuso 15th in Super G

By Lindsey Sine, USSA

VAL d'ISERE, France – It was another podium finish for World Champion Lindsey Vonn (Vail, CO) who, after taking the win in super combined on Friday, finished third Sunday in the Audi FIS World Cup super G in Val d'Isere. Switzerland's Fraenzi Aufdenblatten won the race to mark the first World Cup victory of her career.

Vonn's sixth podium of the season puts her 50 points ahead of rival and friend Maria Riesch of Germany in the Audi FIS World Cup standings going into the holidays. The defending champion has now been on the podium in every discipline but giant slalom this year.

"I was a little bit disappointed with my run today. I thought I didn't execute very well in the top part of the course. I missed the timing on one gate and I feel like I lost the rhythm for the rest of the top," Vonn said. "I wasn't as aggressive as I should have been, but I picked it up on the bottom and all in all I'm happy with the day. It was a solid result and a good end to a good weekend."

Women's Alpine Head Coach Jim Tracy agreed with Vonn, saying the top could have been skied more aggressively.

"Lindsey was a little round on the top, but lit it up on the bottom section, especially where some of the girls were having problems and a couple of crashes happened," Tracy said. "She skied aggressively down there where it was fast and that was good."

Olympic champion Julia Mancuso (Olympic Valley, CA) had a solid day, finishing 15th and showing a lot of promise for

future races.

“Julia skied pretty good. She had a little bobble at the bottom where a bunch of girls had problems. She got a little bit in the back seat and was pushed low on the line,” Tracy said. “Three or four tenths would have put her in a lot better of a position.”

Also making a charge in the super G was Alice Mckennis (Glenwood Springs, CO) who was 22nd, and Stacey Cook (Mammoth Mountain, CA) who, according to Tracy, was ripping the course but went out. McKennis was back in the points in only her fifth World Cup start, grabbing another super G start slot for the USA with her finish.

The women’s Alpine Team now breaks for the holiday season, but will resume competition Dec. 28-29 in Austria for slalom and giant slalom races.

Val d’Isere, France, Dec. 20 Women’s Super G

1. Fraenzi Aufdenblatten, Switzerland, 1:26.43

2. Nadia Styger, Switzerland, 1:26.66

3. Lindsey Vonn, Vail, CO, 1:26.69

4. Fabienne Suter, Switzerland, 1:27.33

5. Nadia Fanchini, Italy, 1:27.45

—

15. Julia Mancuso, Olympic Valley, CA, 1:27.96

22. Alice McKennis, Glenwood Springs, CO, 1:28.46

38. Chelsea Marshall, Pittsfield, VT, 1:29.38

—

DNF: Stacey Cook, Mammoth Mountain, CA; Keely Kelleher, Big

Sky, MT; Leanne Smith, North Conway, NH

Lake Tahoe ski report, Dec. 20



Bundle up because the winds are expected to pick up this afternoon. And those winds could affect lift operations. Here is today's ski report brought to you by Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.

Quest for affordable child care

By Tina Barna

The quest for affordable, quality child care continues to challenge parents, according to the 2009 California Child Care Portfolio.

The 2009 Portfolio is a series of statewide and county-by-county reports documenting licensed child care supply and demand in California. The data was collected in 2008 from local child care resource and referral programs and prepared by the California Child Care Resource & Referral Network, a statewide organization. The 61 locally-based, state-funded child care resource and referral agencies (R&Rs) work to improve the quality, availability, and affordability of child care in their communities. The R&Rs talk with parents daily as

they counsel them in their search for quality child care.

The 2009 Portfolio report indicates that:

â€¢ The supply of child care would fall far short of demand if all families with children 0-13 in the workforce needed child care. Child care availability varies by county, with licensed care available for 33 percent of children 0-13 in El Dorado County with parents in the labor force.

â€¢ El Dorado County has more than 1,800 children living in poverty. More than 600,000 children ages birth to 5 years old live in poverty. Statewide the number of children living in poverty has increased 5 percent between 2006 and 2008. This increase in poverty underscores the importance of maintaining child care subsidies to serve low-income families, including publicly funded centers which represent about a third of licensed center-based programs.

â€¢ Parents need full-time care. Sixty-four percent of child care requests to R&Rs in El Dorado County for children birth to 5 years old are for full-time care and 43 percent are for part-time care. Eighty percent of parents are requesting care because they are working.

â€¢ Parents lack care options during non-traditional hours. Statewide about 9 percent of parents request care during the evening or on weekends, however only 1 to 2 percent of licensed centers offer this type of care. While family child care homes (27 percent) are more likely to offer care during non-traditional hours, they only represent about one-third of the overall licensed supply.

Conscious of the continuing downward spiral of Californiaâ€™s economy, the Network took the initiative in 2009 to survey the local R&R programs to assess if and how child care supply and demand had been impacted in their county since 2008.

Patty Siegel, executive director of the Network, expressed

concern about these reports, noting, â€œAt a time when working families are struggling harder than ever to find and keep their jobs, everyone concerned about economic recovery should be paying close attention to what is happening to our licensed child care supply in California.â€

In response to the Networkâ€™s survey, in El Dorado County, we have seen a drop in both the demand and the supply of licensed child care. For now this is a hidden problem, as demand for child care has declined due to job losses. However, as people return to employment, families will have fewer child care options which will complicate their return to the workforce. It is clear in our community that supporting the supply of quality child care must be included in steps to our economic recovery.

The 29-year-old California Child Care Resource & Referral Network is a nonprofit association of 57 member agencies in counties across California. Resource and referral programs (R&Rs) are a unique hub in the world of child care, connecting parents, providers, and policymakers in each community. R&Rs help parents find child care by providing referrals to licensed programs and by offering important information on how to recognize and choose quality care. R&Rs help child care providers by offering training in child development, safety, and business skills, and they help policymakers by gathering standardized data, identifying key areas of local need, and participating in policy discussions.

Tina Barna is director of Choices for Children

California puts money toward DUI checkpoints

California traffic safety officials continue to tighten their grip on drunken drivers by and declaring 2010 as â€œThe Year of the Checkpoint” and announcing a record $8 million in grant funding to 148 law enforcement agencies for DUI checkpoints â€“ up from $5 million in 2009.

The California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) will fund more than 2,500 sobriety checkpoints in 2010, a 47 percent increase over the 1,700 conducted this year, more than 250 of which will take place between Dec. 18 and Jam. 3 as part of the December DUI Crackdown enforcement campaign, “Report Drunk Drivers. Call 911.”

â€œTo my knowledge, California conducts more checkpoints than any other state,â€ OTS DirectorChristopher J. Murphy said in a press release. â€œDUI checkpoints are time-tested and proven as the most effective DUI countermeasure and Iâ€™m gratified that weâ€™re seeing the life-saving results.â€

Since OTS and law enforcement began placing increased emphasis and funding toward sobriety checkpoints in 2006, alcohol-related deaths have declined in California. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administrationâ€™s Fatality Analysis Reporting System, DUI deaths declined in California by 9.1 percent between 2007 and 2008, marking a total decrease of nearly 21 percent from the most recent high point in 2005. In addition, statewide DUI arrests in 2008 were 214,811 â€“ the highest since 1993.

Budget gifts: Pain relief



Publisher's note: *Get in the spirit and share your idea for a gift valued at $20 or less. Click here for details.*

A wonderful stocking stuffer is a tube of Biofreeze. It's one of the of best topical pain relievers for the sports nut on your list, the computer worker whose neck and shoulders are tight, the shovelers out there, the parents carrying young kids – you name it. A tube is $15 at A Massage at Tahoe in South Lake Tahoe. Call (530) 318.4806 to get a tube or two.

Ski conditions ideal, more snow in forecast

By Kathryn Reed

TWIN BRIDGES – Clouds are expected to move into the area today, with a 30 percent chance of snow tonight above 6,500 feet. This means all the Lake Tahoe resorts will get freshies because lake level is 6,200.

The best chance for snow, according to the National Weather Service, is Monday night – with an 80 percent chance. But don't be surprised if it's snowing most of Monday. This seems appropriate since it's the first day of winter.



Riders waste no time -- Sierra's terrain park on Bashful opened Dec. 19. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Temps will drop as the white stuff comes – expect highs in the 30s, lows in the 20s.

Christmas Day is going to be sunny, assuming forecasters are correct.

Bare skin was seen at Sierra-at-Tahoe's West Bowl on Saturday as the mercury crept into the 40s. The new deck area was full of skiers and boarders taking a break from the groomers.

Coverage is excellent – no obstacles. The trees are a little crunchy, with not many people venturing off the designated trails.

The terrain park on Bashful opened Saturday much to the delight of mostly boarders trying tricks on the attractions. A flat box, corrugated pipe, flat down rail, and a jump are some of the eight features.

For people venturing into the back country, the avalanche danger is moderate above 8,000 feet.