Mancuso just misses podium in super combined

By USSA

MERIBEL, France – World Championship super G bronze medalist Julia Mancuso (Squaw Valley) ripped to second in the downhill half of Sunday's super combined, but dropped to fourth overall after hooking up in the soft snow of the slalom portion.

Tina Maze of Slovenia took the win – her eighth on the season – to boost her World Cup point total to 1,844 and clinch the Audi FIS Alpine World Cup overall title a full three weeks before the end of the season.



Julia Mancuso

Austrians Nicole Hosp and Michaela Kirchgasser finished 2-3.

Laurenne Ross (Bend, Ore.) was 15th and Leanne Smith (N. Conway, N.H.) 26th. Stacey Cook (Mammoth Mountain) did not finish the downhill.

Heavy overnight snow forced the organizers to delay the start of the downhill and lower the start.

"In places we got like two feet of snow last night. It was really soft so those slalom athletes definitely had a good advantage with the lowered downhill start and the better start positions," Mancuso said. "I didn't make any mistakes in the downhill and that was my plan. I made too many yesterday, but

it’s pretty hard to put any time on the slalom skiers. It seemed like we ran about half of the full length of the downhill.”

Ski report: Possible wind issues



It’s shaping up to be a good day on the mountain. However, wind could be a problem for some lifts.

Here is the Feb. 24 ski report.

— Curtis Fong

Ambulance fleet on South Shore upgraded

Three new ambulances are stationed on the South Shore.

There were recently purchased by California Tahoe Emergency Service Operations Authority.



They replaced our three older units that will be used as reserves.

The ambulances are equipped with power load gurneys. The power load system increases the safety for patients and significantly decreases the possibility of back injuries to firefighters. The gurneys are capable of hydraulically lifting any size patient into the ambulance.

Three Zoll “Autopulse” cardiac support units were also purchased. These are automatic CPR machines, which deliver improved blood flow without interruptions during transport. It also eliminates the fatigue factor by EMS personnel and provides hospital caregivers better access to the patient.

CTESOA is the organization overseen by Lake Valley Fire Protection District and South Lake Tahoe Fire Department which manages the ambulance service. Ambulances are housed at fires stations throughout the area to decrease response times during medical emergencies.

Ritz in Beaver Creek – a world of luxurious comfort

By Susan Wood

BEAVER CREEK – After two hours of chatter hearing “turn,” “exit” and “continue” in the car from Denver, the GPS chimed: “You’ve arrived.”

Upon pulling into the circular driveway of the Ritz-Carlton, Bachelor Gulch, the navigation device couldn’t have been more sound in judgment. So, this is how the 1 percent lives.

In its chain of 32 luxury hotels, this Ritz-Carlton located at 8,300 feet and 20 minutes west of Vail on the mountain of Beaver Creek Resort has just captured a gold badge honor as one of the best hotels in the United States, according to *U.S. News and World Repor*t – and for good reason.



Ritz-Carlton, Bachelor Gulch has no problem catering to guests. Photos/Kathryn Reed

The attention to detail, and more specifically to the guest, is unparalleled.

The on-mountain hotel displays that ideal balance of mixing into its national forest surroundings and providing a look of elegance. A stroll into the “Great Room,” i.e. the comfy lounge area that splits Spago’s fine dining room and the Buffalo Bar’s casual fare, makes it obvious this luxury mountain getaway was modeled after some of the great park lodges of our time. Think the Old Faithful Inn in Yellowstone National Park and the Ahwahnee Hotel in Yosemite. Even the grand, three-story stone fireplace that’s the centerpiece of

the Great Room may rival the one at the Ahwahnee’s – a hard feat to pull off.

Massive timber logs notched to forge giant beams and broad gables provide a perfect backdrop when guests decide to relax and read in the cozy chairs surrounding the fireplace and large picture windows. One night, a man was comfortable enough to fall asleep in a chair right in front of the fireplace despite a sizable after-dinner crowd.

Ordinarily, this hotel is definitely a place for those who want to be isolated. Outside, there’s no village. There’s no town. In back, there’s live music and yet another comfortable seating area around a large fire pit and heat lamps as well as picnic tables next to Daniel’s outside bar. This is where bartender Devon Pierce will serve up his own “Red Twist” made with Malibu red rum, coconut liqueur and Sprite – all with a smile. Pierce likes his job and it shows.

“This is the best job here,” he said.

Also rounding out the offering on the big patio is an afternoon Champagne station, a heated pool and three hot tubs – oh, and yes, a chairlift steps away from the hotel that whisks skiers up on the slopes of Beaver Creek, where the impeccable and exclusive customer service continues.

The Bachelor Gulch section of Beaver Creek Resort is quiet and seems private. Even on a powder day, one might be the only skier on the run while others pack the busy part of the Colorado ski area. It’s a wilderness experience swishing through the aspen trees, private residences and resort cabins that dot the landscape.

Bachelor Gulch was named for seven bachelors who settled in the area alongside the Ute Indians for prospecting purposes in the 1900s. They stayed for farming and ranching. (Note: the Trapper’s Cabin hosted “The Bachelor” television show a few years ago.)

Today, skiers and boarders riding Beaver Creek and staying at the Ritz notice the level of service upon every turn. On a ski day, it starts by trading room slippers for ski boots at the Ritz ski valet and having a worker insist on carrying the skis and poles up to the lift line. Now, that's a true ski-in, ski-out experience – whether for a hotel guest, fractional timeshare participant or whole owner.

Chris Gerlach and his companion from St. Louis, who were riding the Beaver Creek shuttle bus after a food and wine event, liked the Ritz fractional timeshare experience so much he bought a house in the Bachelor Gulch neighborhood.

"I'd go home and not know what to do. There was no one there to say 'my pleasure,' every minute," he quipped about the Ritz guest services.

And to think, this luxury hotel that claims to go to "heaven and Earth and back" to answer the whims of its guests, admits to having room for improvement.

After 10 years as of last November, Beaver Creek's only AAA-rated 5-diamond resort is set in April to undergo a $15 million remodel that's designed to improve the guest experience.

"The enhancement plans will add a renewed sense of energy to this iconic resort," Ritz-Carlton Bachelor Gulch General Manager Abdullah Vural said in a statement.

Spokeswoman Jen Winkeller told *Lake Tahoe News* the update would provide "a contemporary perspective to the existing rugged décor while preserving the Ritz-Carlton elegance and comfort."

For starters, linens in the guest rooms as well as furniture, paintings and other decorative items will be updated. Even without feeling they need upgrading, food and beverage outlets will get a makeover as well.

For now, in-room dining has an extensive list of burgers – from bison and lean elk to vegan and gluten free. On the lobby level, Peet's coffeehouse provides casual drinks and snacks. The Buffalo sports bar offers middle-of-the-road entrees and appetizers. (Recommended: two people may gnaw on the nachos for two meals.) For fine dining, Spago's fun Jersey-cow seats at its restaurant and bar are almost as recognizable as its famous chef, Wolfgang Puck – who pops in on occasion to check on staff or for special events. (Recommended: at the bar, the Perfect Martini is off-the-charts refreshing with its mix of Absolut Pears Vodka, pear puree and fresh lime juice.)

And eating and drinking isn't the only way to unwind here after a full or half day on the slopes.

The Ritz-Carlton, Bachelor Gulch comes with a 21,000-square-foot spa and fitness center featuring 19 treatment rooms surrounding a rock-lined grotto designed to emulate the mines of the 1900s that mark the area's history. The grotto has a large hot tub filled with salt water from a free-flowing waterfall to place sore shoulder and back muscles under. Between the soothing hot water, comfortable seating and dim lighting, it's easy to fall asleep and lose track of time. That's why the outside hot tubs provide a refreshing option for those who relish the 10-degree night air in their faces.

Before settling into a guest room, the spa's steam room and sauna allow for a warm-to-the-bones, melt-into-the-night way of tucking in for the evening.

The 180 guest rooms, divided by their offerings of a valley or mountain view and gas fireplace and/or balcony, have some nice touches without overstating its wooden mountain decor. The fridge is stocked every day with free Colorado-brewed beers and fresh water. Wander from the oversized bathtub or glass-lined shower in a soft, cushy robe and you may never want to leave the room.

But when deciding to meander through the Ritz, guests never know what may come their way. Staffers stand sincere and ready to accommodate. Chestnuts roasting on the fire are handed out one night, mulling wine on another night. (Note: if not for attending Beaver Creek's recent Food and Wine Festival where wine poured day and night, I would have sampled the latter.)

A guest can even order what time housekeeping shows up, as I discovered upon checking out. The request can be "put in your file," front desk staffer Jacki Smith indicated. Smith added how the hotel undergoes changes to improve the guest experience. These include reorganizations to keep the chain solvent, as in the Bachelor Gulch hotel's foreclosure deal.

Nowadays, that's a part of the hospitality world. (Note: The Ritz-Carlton, Lake Tahoe underwent the same type of restructuring at about the same time.)

In the meantime, staffers have come to embrace the Ritz lifestyle nearly as much as the guests.

Tim Rowland may argue with Pierce that he has the best job.

Rowland, who operates the hotel shuttle vehicle, has double duty as a caretaker for one of the Ritz's mascot dogs, a St. Bernard named Bachelor. (An ice sculpture of the canine greets guests at the front door.) Bachelor greets guests in person at 11am and 3pm. He's groomed twice a month for the job and racks up "an expensive food bill," Rowland noted.

"It's a good company to work for. They train you well and there are a lot of perks," he said, while driving us to Vail to ski one morning.

What's his favorite perk?

"The hotel discounts," he said.

Guests may say the same thing this year to mark the hotel's 10th season. Through March, the Ritz is offering its Ritz Kids

recreation program for $10 an hour. Also for 10 bucks, guests may get a fourth night when they stay for three on the 10th anniversary package deal. There's also a $10 apres ski menu at the Buffalo Bar from 3-5pm, and late-night dinner specials at that price after 10pm.

Otherwise, guests coming to stay after March 31 may need to pull out their wallets. After all, it's the Ritz-Carlton.

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Women's Fund has money to give out in El Dorado County

Applications are now open for the 2013 grant cycle for Women's Fund El Dorado.



This philanthropic organization is based on the principal of collective giving and operates under the umbrella of the El Dorado Community Foundation.

Each donor member gives $200 or more annually, and each has an equal vote in deciding how to distribute the year's grant money. The organization's Grants Committee researches various nonprofit and educational requests to fund specific programs and then determines which will appear on each year's ballot.

This group in its first five years of existence has granted $200,000 to local nonprofit organizations in El Dorado County.

This year, the donor members of the Women's Fund have chosen the following categories to focus on:

• $40,000 in Youth Development Grants

• $10,000 divided three ways to programs and/or services for Women & Children, Senior Support, and Physical Health & Mental Health/

Complete guidelines and application forms are available at the office of the El Dorado Community Foundation, 312 Main St., Placerville. All proposals must be received by noon March 20.

Letter: Is Lake Tahoe sustainable?

To the community,

In relationships, it takes the accumulation of many incidents to hit that "final straw". In this case, four years of relentless attacks on a Nevada redevelopment project set to lead sustainable development, "broke the camel's back".

Nevada feels redevelopment abuse. California resents Nevada for the lion's share of transient occupancy tax money. While Nevada has more per-existing buildable land, much of California infrastructure exist on stream environmental zones. "Unfair" sharing of these assets and liabilities, plus uneven regulatory

representation escalated decades of unresolved tensions and resentments to the abyss of divorce.

The first exhale of severed obligations feels like freedom to do your own thing, without having to answer to that "oppressive, spoiled or controlling partner, because you showed 'em!" Then "in-laws" NEPA and CEPA weigh in, despite each states' own development/mitigation playbook. And what about custody? Has anyone sat with the lake to explain why severing a 40-year collaboration for unknown repercussions is best?

After witnessing many of the inflictions still bleeding, I agree – a shift is in order. The TRPA regional update demonstrates motivation is high. But divorce? Really? Isn't it hard enough to have a single source of the world's most precious drinking water already under the diverse directives of 2 states, 5 counties, 1 city + 2 federal agencies? So further divide and polarize? In nature diversity works together to increase ecosystem stability.

Last year Sustainable Tahoe enrolled 15 NGOs, 12 agencies and 35 business from South Lake the Pyramid Lake to collaborate in showcasing our unique water, land, wildlife, culture and heritage. Together we created a regionwide demonstration of how prosperity with water clarity is possible! So before we pull further apart, consider what is at stake … one watershed with one majestic lake.

Jacquie Chandler, Sustainable Tahoe

Seminar to focus on employment law

The business community is invited to attend the employment law update “What’s on Your Mind?” on March 1, from 9am-noon at the Lake Tahoe South Shore Chamber of Commerce, 169 Highway 50 in Stateline.



Sponsored by the chamber in partnership with the Sierra Human Resources Association, this seminar includes updated information managers and business professionals need to know for 2013.

The format includes a presentation followed by plenty of time to ask attorneys from California and Nevada questions. David Cohen of Cohen Durrett LLP in Sacramento and Nicole Harvey of Harvey Law Firm in Reno will cover new laws as well as best employment practices in general.

Early bird registration: $39 for chamber and SHRA members, $49 for non-members. Beverages and snacks will be provided at 8:30am. Attendees will be able to purchase 2013 employment law products at a discount.

Seating is limited and advance registration is required online.

For more info, call Laura Moriarty at (530) 573.0224 or Emily Abernathy at (775) 588.5900, ext. 303.

Letter: South Tahoe on path to being ghost town

To the community,

Recently I reread Wallace Stegner's "Where the Bluebird Sings to Lemonade Springs." It's about living and writing in the West.

Also, I read Irving Stone's "Men to Match my Mountains." It's a big book about the winning of the far West.



Bill Crawford

Both books are in part about the periods of boom and bust in the far West, the gold and silver strikes. And when the strikes petered out, many towns died and were ghost towns. The books are about more than that. But the theme of boom and bust fits South Lake Tahoe.

I thought of the casinos across the state line. For me they are comparable to gold and silver strikes in the their boom times. Over time millions came here to gamble, strike it rich at the dice and card tables. But now the casinos are in major decline. The boom is dead. The bust is here. On the California side of the state line the casino bust is deeply felt. So are we becoming a far West ghost town? When I look around, it seems we are going down that rocky road.

Bill Crawford, South Lake Tahoe

Get in the ACT of bowling to help animals

A night of bowling will help Animal Coalition of Tahoe.



At Tahoe Bowl on March 20 from 6-8pm a portion of the proceeds will benefit ACT's spay-neuter program and the El Dorado County Animal Shelter. There will also be a raffle.

The Animal Coalition of Tahoe has been working hard since the Mutt Strut in October to raise funds.

More than 1,600 spay-neuter vouchers have been distributed in the past nine years.

At Tahoe Bowl a portion of the beer and pizza sales also go to ACT.

For more information, call (530) 307.3638 or email info@tahoeanimals.org.

Report: Outdoor recreation big business for California

By Jennifer Booton, Fox Business

Outdoor recreation generates more than $85 billion in consumer spending and creates about 732,000 jobs each year in California, according to a report by the Outdoor Industry Association.

Contributing more nationally to consumer spending than both the household utilities and gasoline sectors combined, the industry that includes hiking, bicycling, fishing and skiing is bigger than most people realize, the group argues.

“Outdoor recreation is a significant economic driver,” it said in the report.



Lake Tahoe residents know all about playing outdoors. Photo/LTN file

Offering a number of open, public spaces, including Yosemite National Park, Redwood national and state parks and Big Sur, a sparsely populated region of California’s Central Coast that spans dozens of miles, California is by far the nation’s largest contributor to outdoor recreation.

Money spent on gear, vehicles, trips and travel-related expenses there generate $270 billion in California wages and salaries and $6.7 billion in state and local tax revenue each year. The group estimates that at least 59 percent of California residents participate in outdoor recreation each year.

“This creates jobs, supports communities, generates tax revenue and helps drive the economy,” the Outdoor Industry Association said.

The report comes as California struggles to improve its economy in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis. The state pays public workers more than any of the other 12 most populous states, according to Bloomberg, and has struggled to overcome deep debt obligations.

On a national level, outdoor recreation generates $646 billion in consumer spending while contributing nearly $40 billion in federal and state and local tax revenue.

The market contributes more to consumer spending than household utilities and gasoline combined, and also trumps pharmaceuticals and motor vehicles, according to the report.

The next largest contributor to outdoor activity behind California is Florida, generating about $38.3 billion in consumer spending a year, followed by New York with $33.8 billion and Texas with $28.7 billion.

The industry, which creates more than 6.1 million direct American jobs nationally, also generates more employment than construction, oil and gas, education and transportation, the industry group says.