STHS grad not thrilled with NIT bid

By Samuel Benson, Deseret News

PROVO – With a No. 2 seed and a first-round home game, BYU has to be feeling good about its NIT seeding. For seven-seed UAB, not so much.



Jerod Haase

The Blazers won the Conference USA regular-season championship, but a first-round loss in the conference tournament ended their NCAA Tournament hopes. UAB was expected to be rewarded with a favorable NIT bid but was instead given one of the last eight seeds.

“I think players feel a little disrespected by the seeding, but head coach Jerod Haase doesn’t think there is a lot of separation between seeds one through eight,” said Drew Champlin of AL.com. “I don’t think they had BYU in the back of their minds when it came to opponents, but that’s just how the draw fell.”

Haase, a South Tahoe High School grad, has a point.

Read the whole story

March Madness betting expected to hit $9.2 bil.

By J.D. Morris, Las Vegas Sun

Americans are expected to bet $9.2 billion on March Madness this year, according to an estimate released today by a Washington, D.C.-based lobbying and trade group for the casino industry.

The projection from the American Gaming Association includes wagering through office pools, legal Nevada sports books, offshore sites and illegal bookies.

It marks an uptick from last year, when the association said Americans would bet $9 billion on the annual college basketball tournament.

Read the whole story

Ganong 6th at World Cup Finals

By USSA

ST. MORITZ, Switzerland – Steven Nyman (Sundance, Utah) scored his fourth-straight downhill podium – an American record – finishing second at the Audi FIS Ski World Cup Finals to wrap up the season Wednesday.

“I skied really, really well today,” Nyman said. “I nailed the top … but the last turn I was a little to shallow and didn’t carry the speed I needed too and that’s where Beat (Feuz) got me and took the lead.”

Switzerland’s Feuz won the race, finishing just 0.08 ahead of Nyman – or just 2.39 meters, which is about the length of a downhill ski. Canada’s Erik Guay was third – his best downhill result of the season. Travis Ganong (Squaw Valley) was sixth, while Andrew Weibrecht (Lake Placid, N.Y.) was 21st. Peter Fill finished 10th, but scored just enough points to become the first Italian to win the overall World Cup downhill Crystal Globe.

Nyman, who finished sixth in the overall downhill standings, finished the 11-race downhill season with four-straight podium finishes: third Jeongseon, second Chamonix, third Kvitfjell and second in St. Moritz.Wednesday’s result not only motivates Nyman for next season, but most importantly the 2017 World Championships on the same course in St. Moritz, and the 2018 Olympic Winter Games in South Korea.

“To have four podiums in a row, I’m really fired up and ready to carry that momentum into next season,” said Nyman, who became the first American skier to podium in four-straight World Cup events. Previously, two U.S. athletes had three-straight podium finishes, including Daren Rahlves in 2003 and 2006; and Bode Miller in 2008.

In the women’s downhill, Austria’s Mirjam Puchner scored her first World Cup downhill victory. Switzerland’s Fabienne Suter was second, just 0.13 back, and Italy’s Elena Curtoni was third. Stacey Cook (Mammoth Lakes) was 11th and Laurenne Ross (Bend, Ore.) was 15th.

Lindsey Vonn (Vail), who won five downhill races this season but suffered a season-ending left tibial plateau fracture on Feb. 27, was presented with her 20th career Crystal Globe

following the women’s downhill race Wednesday.

“I felt like I had a really great year – nine wins – and to be able to still take home one Globe at least, even though I had to end my season early, it means a lot,” Vonn said. “I worked so hard and was so close – I was leading four titles when I got hurt – so to still have at least one (Globe), that was huge and I’m pretty excited about it.”

Anderson helps U.S. sweep wins in China

By USSA

YABULI, China – It was an American sweep at the World Snowboard Federation’s Corona World Championships of Snowboarding slopestyle event, where Brandon Davis (Mammoth Lakes) took the title for the men and Jamie Anderson (Meyers) won her second title of the week. Julia Marino (Westport, Conn.) scored her first major slopestyle podium with a third-place finish for the ladies.

Anderson, who also won the big air world title on Sunday, linked up a technical run to take the win in slopestyle on Tuesday. Tricks like a Cab 720 to switch backside 540 and high-caliber rail riding, finessed with her trademark smooth style, earned Anderson the top spot on the podium. The 25-year-old from Tahoe capped off a stellar season after recovering from a broken collarbone in early December; Anderson’s season included the two WSF World Champion titles, an X Games silver medal, her third-consecutive U.S. Open title and three World Cup wins.

Marino officially made it a breakout year with her podium at the World Championships, after winning the Polartec Big Air at Fenway event in February for her first major win. At just 18 years old, Marino became the first woman ever to land a double in slopestyle competition and she landed not one, but two in the same run—a Cab double underflip on her first jump and a double backflip on her last jump. Marino, who didn't land her first two runs, had to face the pressure of putting it together on her third and final run, but she didn't hold back with a safety run.

"I fell on my first two runs so the pressure was on for my last one," Marino said. "I'm so glad I was able to put it down; I'm just flowing with happiness right now. I didn't do the double wildcat in practice but I really felt it because I did a bunch of singles on the jumps."

Karly Shorr (Milford, Mich.) finished ninth, Kirra Kotsenburg (Park City, Utah) was 10th and Jessika Jenson (Rigby, Idaho) was 12th.

The WSF World Championship title was Davis' second major win of the season, after taking the top spot on his home turf at the Mammoth U.S. Grand Prix in February.

"Today was interesting, I was just having a lot of fun," Davis said. "I had fallen on my first two runs and I was still having a ton of fun up there – that's really what snowboarding's about. I kept my energy high and my expectations low and it ended up working out for me."

Davis also gave props to his teammate Chas Guldemond (Reno), who won the last World Champion title in 2012. "The only thing that blows my mind is the last person that won this contest was Chas Guldemond, and Chas is a legend."

Eric Beauchemin (Grand Blanc, Mich.) had a great performance, finishing just off the podium in fourth. Nik Baden (Steamboat Springs, Colo.) was 10th and Ryan Stassel (Anchorage) finished

12th.

Being aware and prepared for an avalanche

By Tia Rancort

With all the recent snowfall we've been experiencing and more on the way, it's a good reminder to be aware of avalanche potential and educate ourselves on proactive steps to take before going outside to recreate – whether skiing, snowboarding, snowmobiling, snowshoeing or hiking.

Proactive steps that you can take before going out include:

· Check Sierra Avalanche Center's recorded avalanche advisory at 530.587.3558, ext. 258.

· Go **online** to learn more details about avalanche safety and training classes that are available. Also, most local sports shops offer free classes and training throughout the winter.

· **Recognize warning signs:**

o Such as recent avalanches (if there are new avalanches, it's likely that more are possible in that area).

o Signs of unstable snow as you travel (cracking or collapsing snowpack, whumpfing sounds, hollow drum-like sounds on hard snow).

o Heavy snowfall or rain in the past 24 hours (significant snowfall or rain can make the snowpack unstable; avalanches

are often triggered the first clear day after a storm; because it’s sunny doesn’t mean it’s safe).

o Windblown snow (loads leeward slopes, even when it’s not snowing out).

o Significant warming or rapidly increasing temperatures (warm temps and gravity can cause the snow to creep downhill and become less stable).

o Persistent weak layers (can be triggered weeks after a storm, they can be difficult to identify so check the Avalanche Advisory for your area)

· **Identify avalanche terrain:**

o Slope angle (avalanches are possible on any slope steeper than 30 degrees, and occur most frequently on slopes 35 – 50 degrees).

o Terrain traps (anything that increases the consequences of being caught in a slide such as cliffs, trees and rocks).

o Common trigger points (under certain conditions avalanches may be triggered from flatter areas in the runout zone or along ridge crests)

o Aspect (which way does the slope face in relation to sun, wind?).

· **Safe travel protocol:**

o Back country travelers should carry proper gear such as a transceiver, probe, and shovel.

o Always carry your gear on your body with your transceiver turned on.

o Consider riding with an inflatable pack to increase your chances of staying on top of an avalanche.

o Practice with your gear regularly. Seconds count and your gear only works when you can use it confidently and efficiently in bad conditions.

o Carry the gear and supplies you need to survive an injury or a long evacuation in winter conditions.

o Be able to communicate with your partners and rescuers.

o Remember that your gear helps you have a safer and more fun day – it does not guarantee your safety.

o Never expose more than one person to avalanche danger at a time (one on a slope at a time).

o Stay alert to changing snow stability due to changes in aspect, elevation, or weather factors (heavy precipitation, wind or warming).

o Communicate within your group, have options.

o Be prepared to do a rescue.

For more information on avalanche safety, go **online.**

Remember, the best tip is to "Know Before You Go", the avalanche danger rating is only a starting point. You control your own risk by choosing where, when and how you travel.

Tia Rancourt works for North Lake Tahoe Fire Protection District.

Science helps people ride a

bike the right way

By Christopher Ingraham, Washington Post

About 94 percent of American adults know how to ride a bike, according to an August 2013 YouGov survey. Once you learn how to ride one, you probably never forget (thanks, muscle memory!). But most of us probably don't think too hard about how we actually ride a bike – how we hop on board and get our balance and start pedaling away.

If you were a professor of mechanical engineering, you might say that "the control strategies humans employ to balance a bicycle while riding are not well understood." That's the question that motivated Stephen Cain and his colleagues at the University of Michigan Ann-Arbor to figure out what separates novice bike riders – those folks you see wobbling uncomfortably down the street on a CitiBike – from the more skilled riders who go whizzing past them.

In a piece for the *Conversation*, Cain describes the experiment: "We conducted our experiments in a motion capture laboratory, where the riders rode a typical mountain bike on rollers." Think of rollers as a low-tech treadmill that you can put a bike on. "They require a bicycle rider to maintain balance by pedaling, steering and leaning, as one would outdoors," Cain writes.

Read the whole story

Why Reno Aces doesn’t have bat girls

By Mark Robison, Reno Gazette-Journal

Why are the Reno Aces seeking bat girls but not bat boys?

Short answer: Hiring 16-year-old girls to work around adult men in a locker room would not be appropriate.

A bat boy for a minor league team has many more duties than is what are seen by fans.

“They have pre- and post-game locker room duties which include all that may be seen in a male adult locker room,” said Reno Aces President Eric Edelstein. “That’s why it has to be different [regarding gender]. Typically, the work is done by someone with an eligible age of 16 but not an adult.”

Read the whole story

Bookmakers flummoxed by Oregon No. 1 seed over Michigan State

By Case Keefer, Las Vegas Sun

The first upset of the NCAA Tournament took place days before the games tipped off.

The tournament’s selection committee deemed the team leading most Las Vegas betting boards in odds to win the national championship over the last few weeks unworthy of a top seed.

Despite almost all projections indicating the contrary before the selection show, Oregon beat out Michigan State to join Kansas, North Carolina and Virginia as the No. 1 seeds.

Read the whole story

State Parks to conduct fire ops in basin

California State Parks may continue prescribed fire operations beginning March 14, weather permitting.

On the North and West shores, operations may take place in Burton Creek, Sugar Pine Point and D.L. Bliss state parks. To view a map with project locations and details, go **online**.

Residual smoke may be seen in locations where operations have taken place over the last several weeks.

To receive prescribed fire notifications, send an email to pa_ltbmu@fs.fed.us.

Heavenly set to make modest

upgrades

The U.S. Forest Service last week gave the go-ahead for Heavenly Mountain Resort to proceed with plans to improve amenities on the mountain.

Projects include upgrading the existing skiing and snowboarding terrain near the Tamarack lift at the top of the gondola. Obstacles will be removed and the Tamarack Return Trail widened.

Trees will be removed from beneath the Blue Streak zipline.

A permanent ticket sales kiosk will be built adjacent to the Bear Cave Ski School near Tamarack Lodge. This will replace the temporary structures that are currently in use.

A 300-foot magic carpet surface lift will be installed for lessons.

Work is expected to start this spring.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report