Fantasy sports group aims to stem regulation by fixing self

By Kimberly Pierceall, AP

The trade group representing both daily and season-long fantasy sports companies is hoping to head off outside regulation by regulating itself.

The Fantasy Sports Trade Association announced Tuesday it would form the Fantasy Sports Control Agency led by former acting U.S. Labor Secretary Seth D. Harris.

The attempt to self-regulate comes as legal scrutiny of the daily fantasy sports industry led by DraftKings and FanDuel grows and questions are raised about consumer protections including what information employees have access to and when. Until recently, employees at one site were able to play on other sites.

Paul Charchian, president of the association that was started in 1998 and now represents about 300 companies, wrote in a separate email to the group's membership that for those sites offering paid fantasy contests, "the necessity for some form of regulation is upon us."

"We can establish and enforce these systems ourselves, or we can put our industry in the hands of outside entities who do not understand the industry as we do – outside entities who are not as able nor as committed to establishing rules and regulations that ensure integrity and transparency while allowing the industry to continue to thrive," he wrote. "Simply put, the leadership of the FSTA believes that we cannot and shot not allow the future of our industry to rest in the hands of others."

Nevada regulators recently decided that daily fantasy sports is a form of gambling and companies would need to be licensed with the state in order to keep doing business there. Other states are considering legislation that would regulate and tax the industry.

“The first step, when you run into a scandal like this, is we’re going to self-regulate,” said I. Nelson Rose, a professor of gambling law at Whittier University in Southern California. “It’s a good (public relations) move. It won’t do much to prevent legislation and court cases.”

He said the agency should find a friendly state and volunteer to be taxed so states become allies rather than potential enemies.

Having overseen multiple regulatory and enforcement agencies, former U.S. Labor Secretary Harris said he’s seen first-hand government’s limited resources.

“The hope is the government won’t need to intervene,” Harris said.

He said he hopes to have the agency up and running within three to six months.

The group said its agency would operate independently and establish auditing procedures as well as incentives and penalties to enforce the industry standards it creates.

Harris said he envisions the agency issuing certified seals to companies that play by the agency’s rules.

“We think that that seal is going to have immense value,” he said, adding that he expects players, lawmakers and industry members will pay attention to who gets one and why.

He said he’s not sure, yet, if the agency itself will be responsible for auditing the companies to ensure they’re complying or if they’ll be required to hire outside auditors

to do so.

“The central premise of this effort is prevention, not punishment,” he said.

As for punishment, if any member were breaking the law, “nothing we’re going to do is going to foreclose on law enforcement intervening,” he said.

Blustery, cold, snowy weather in forecast



Snow is falling Oct. 28 at the higher elevations of Lake Tahoe. Photo/National Weather Service

Lake Tahoe’s first winter storm of the season is expected to arrive this weekend.

Winds will be gusting at about 50 mph in valleys and 100 mph along mountain tops ahead of a strong cold front Sunday, according to the National Weather Service in Reno.

Rain and snow showers will move into the region Sunday into

Monday, with accumulating snow likely in the Sierra. Snow levels will start between 7,500 and 9,000 feet on Sunday, falling to about 5,000 feet by Monday.

Overnight lows will be in the 20s starting tonight. The high temp for next Monday and Tuesday may not reach 40 degrees.

Outdoors industry muscles into politics

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

The backcountry can be a great place to escape – except when it comes to politics.

That's especially true in western swing states such as Nevada and Colorado where political experts and special interest groups are already trying to galvanize allies and marginalize enemies for the 2016 campaign cycle.

And when it comes to winning votes from outdoors enthusiasts public lands become the political battlefield.

Look no further than a recent push from the Outdoor Industry Association to highlight swing state voters' affinity for keeping public land in Nevada and Colorado in the hands of the federal government.

Read the whole story

Smoke from controlled burns drifting into basin

Smoke filling the southern of the Lake Tahoe Basin on Monday night is from the Eldorado National Forest.

Crews have a number of controlled burns going.

For more info about where the fires are, go **online.**

The offshore game of online sports betting

By James Glanz, Agustin Armendariz and Walt Bognaich, New York Times

Hard by the High Line, in a vintage industrial building with a Romanesque arch, lights flash on powerful computers in row after row of metal cabinets and cages. Power lines connect the equipment to diesel generators on the roof. Cables route data through the building to conduits beneath New York City streets.

This is one small corner of the Internet, unremarkable except for the confluence of two facts: Sports betting is largely illegal in the United States. And this Manhattan building, on 10th Avenue in Chelsea, is one node in a vast network used by a major offshore sports book — ever faster, ever more sophisticated and harder to track or regulate.

The network is traversed by United States customers of pinnaclesports.com, a hugely successful Internet sports-

gambling company with headquarters until recently in a shopworn hotel in the tiny Caribbean island nation of Curaçao. The unlikely chief of Pinnacle Sports is a granddaughter of a former North Dakota governor who famously engaged in a bit of Cold War diplomacy with Nikita S. Khrushchev.

For years, offshore sports books like Pinnacle have used technology and other means to keep prosecutors at bay. In the United States, field agents are arrested, money is forfeited and the illegal gambling rings are seemingly dismantled. Yet they rise again, with different street soldiers and a new arsenal of deception. The one constant is the Internet, which allows for the electronic brain of these sports books to evolve, beyond the reach of American prosecutors.

This pattern raises a persistent question: Are the successes of law enforcement tantamount to cutting off a lizard's tail only to see it grow again, and if so, is the battle even worth fighting? Is the better way – with gambling increasingly woven into the fabric of American sports – to simply legalize it so it can be regulated?

Read the whole story

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2 bear cubs to spend winter at LTWC

By Kendra Kostelecky , KOLO-TV

Lake Tahoe Wildlife Care Sanctuary has two new residents for the winter , and these tiny cubs won't have time to hibernate.

"They are so much underweight we're going to have to feed them

all winter to try to get them up to that 50-60 pounds," explains Tom Millham, Secretary Treasurer of LTWC.

The male and female cubs recently came in from Sequioa National Park near Bakersfield, California.

One of the young bears weighed as little as 7 pounds when it arrived.
Now the goal is to get them to eat as much as possible.

Read the whole story

Widespread prescribed fire operations in basin

North Lake Tahoe and Tahoe Douglas fire protection districts, California State Parks and the U.S. Forest Service will conduct prescribed fire operations this week in multiple locations around the Lake Tahoe Basin.

Operations may take place near Incline Village, Tahoe City, Meyers, Stateline and Zephyr Cove. Operations may continue over the next several weeks as conditions allow.

Smoke from prescribed fire operations is normal and may continue for several days after an ignition depending on the project size and environmental conditions.

Before prescribed fire operations are conducted, agencies post road signs around areas affected by prescribed fire, send email notifications and update the local fire information line at 530.543.2816. To receive prescribed fire notifications, send an email to pa_ltbmu@fs.fed.us.

Funds roll in for South Tahoe bike trails

Money is coming from the state to help with South Lake Tahoe bike trails.

The California Tahoe Conservancy is receiving $1.928 million for a 1.8-mile segment of the South Tahoe Greenway Shared Use Trail. The Conservancy will use that money plus $2 million in local and matching funds to link the Sierra Tract and Bijou neighborhoods to Al Tahoe Boulevard.

The first part of the Greenway was laid this summer. One day it will go from Meyers to Stateline.

South Lake Tahoe is receiving $2.145 million for the Al Tahoe Boulevard Safety and Mobility Enhancement Project. The project area extends from the intersection of Al Tahoe and Johnson boulevards to Highway 50. It will upgrade road crossings and add Class I and Class II trails to improve access around South Tahoe Middle School.

The money is part of the California Transportation Commission's 114 biking and walking projects that in all are valued at more than $262 million.

"Caltrans has a strategic goal to triple cycling and double walking and transit trips statewide by 2020," Caltrans Director Malcolm Dougherty said in a statement. "We are committed to investing in projects that expand the availability of bike and pedestrian access throughout the state."

Mt. Rose expects to open next week

Mount Rose Ski Resort is on pace to be the first Lake Tahoe area ski resort to open for the season.

A countdown clock is on the resort's **website**. Oct. 30 is the projected first day.

The resort has been able to make snow overnight with the temps in the low 30s. Last weekend's rains also brought snow to higher elevations throughout the basin.

The one lift that will run is Flying Jenny.

Lake Tahoe to host women, men Tour of California professional cyclists in 2016



Tour of California organizers are confident snow will not be an issue in Tahoe like it was in 2011. Photo/Lisa J. Tolda/Copyright

By Kathryn Reed

Expect snow in May 2016 – Amgen's Tour of California bike race is coming back to Lake Tahoe.

The men and women will be riding on the same day – May 19. The women's stage 1 will start and finish at Heavenly Mountain Resort, and the men will complete stage 5 at the California Lodge after leaving from Lodi.

"The iconic landscape of the lake and everything else around it add a lot of beauty and glamour around the race. It shows off our state in the best light," Michael Roth, with AEG, told *Lake Tahoe News*. "The biggest challenge is to continue to challenge the riders with a tougher course and I think they all appreciate that."

AEG produces the multiday event that is now in its 11th year.



Tahoe-only views like cyclists coming through Cave Rock and the challenges of the route keep the area popular with riders and race promoters. Photo Copyright 2015 Carolyn E. Wright

Sir Bradley Wiggins of Britain is the only confirmed cyclist. He won the race in 2014, which he did while being the reigning Olympic champion.

“He will be getting ready for his fourth Olympics in 2016. His road to the Olympics will come through California,” Roth said.

Other athletes who will be competing will be announced after the first of the year.

With the men's race starting in Southern California a week later than previous years, organizers have their fingers crossed this will help when it comes to weather. This is the second year for a south to north route.

"A lot of times we get the question 'Are the men ever coming back?' A lot has to do with geography. When the start is in Sacramento or Santa Rosa it doesn't make a lot of sense to come east," Carol Chaplin, executive director of the Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority, told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Snow has been an issue each of the two times the race has come to Tahoe. **In 2011**, the men were to start near Stateline and finish at Northstar, with the second stage leaving from Squaw Valley. The two Tahoe area starts were aborted because snow was falling.

This past May it was touch-and-go as the women were getting loosened up for the start from the Cal Lodge at Heavenly. Mother Nature finally cooperated with skies becoming blue and the temperatures rising enough to give the green light. **This year the women** had two days of racing on the South Shore.

2015 proved Tahoe isn't the only place where it snows in May. The men's and women's time trials had to be moved from Big Bear Lake because of the white stuff.

The threat of snow clearly isn't keeping organizers away from Tahoe.

The men will ride about 800 miles between 12 host cities from May 15-22. They start in San Diego and end in Sacramento.

The women compete May 19-22, covering about 200 miles. The race will be the first U.S. event on the inaugural UCI Women's WorldTour.

New this year is the men and women will be riding from the same start locations, but not on identical courses so they are not actually competing against each other.



As in 2015, the women in 2016 will start from Heavenly Mountain Resort's Cal Lodge. Photo Copyright 2015 Carolyn E. Wright

The exact routes will not be released until later this year. However, with North Lake Tahoe Resort Association being a partner with the Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority in promoting the Tahoe aspect of the race, it is obvious the cyclists will be hitting the North Shore.

This year the women did the 72 miles around the lake and then finished with the steep climb up Keller Road in South Lake Tahoe. Another loop around the lake is being planned for 2016.

For the men, coming from the Central Valley the scenic route would be to come up Highway 88 over Carson and Luther passes. This keeps Highway 50 over Echo Summit, the main route for vehicles into the South Shore, open without delays.

Most likely the women will start and finish before the men arrive.

The next day – May 20 – is the time trials for the women and men. The riders and the 1,000-person entourage for the tour will drive to Folsom from South Lake Tahoe.

“It’s a great challenge for us to come up with the courses every year. We find new areas and locations to feature,” Roth said. “Part of the thing that makes this race so popular is that we continue to expose the race to new communities and we continue to bring it back to the communities that have supported it the most.”

One thing that makes an event like this different than other professional sports is the ability to meet the athletes before and after they ride, as well as participate on the same terrain they are on. Many of the riders hang out afterward at what becomes a party at the finish.

The lifestyle festival will be in the parking lot of the Cal Lodge. It is expected to be larger next year because South Lake Tahoe is hosting the two competitions, plus the men’s sponsors will be in town with booths. There will be VIP tents, which anyone can pay for that experience.

For those who aren’t in one of the host cities, the event is televised. ASO is AEG’s broadcast partner. This is the same company that for years has produced the Tour de France. The Tour of California is televised internationally, with more than 200 network affiliates part of the coverage.

“We do it primarily because it helps send the message that we are a great place for both elite athletes and recreational riders to come and enjoy spectacular scenery and really good riding,” Chaplin said. “We are also hopeful that it drives incremental overnight stays and there is an economic impact through the event.”