Coloradans do well at Ironman Lake Tahoe

Stephen O'Mara (M30-34) who lives in San Rafael, but hails from Ireland, was the first to cross the finish line winning the men's Ironman 70.3 Lake Tahoe age-group race in a time of 4:25:27. On the women's side, Erica Clevenger (F18-24), a student at the University of Arizona,was the top female age-grouper in the Ironman 70.3 Lake Tahoe race with a time of 4:54:25.

For Ironman Lake Tahoe, Gregory Lindquist (M30-34) from Boulder, Colo., earned the win in the men's age-group race with a time of 9:39:23, while Sonja Wieck (F35-39) from Greenwood Village, Colo., took home the women's age-group race with a time of 10:28:55. Wieck was originally signed up to compete in the Ironman 70.3 race, but upon arriving in Lake Tahoe decided to push herself even further in the 140.6-mile Ironman Lake Tahoe race.

More than 2,000 total athletes competed Sunday in the Lake Tahoe triathlons. Ironman Lake Tahoe triathlon consisted of a 2.4-mile swim, 112-mile bike and 26.2-mile run. Competitors ranged in age from 19 to 70 and represented 32 countries and 45 states. The event offered 50 age-group qualifying slots to the 2016 Ironman World Championship, taking place on Oct. 8 in Kailua-Kona, Hawaii.

Full results may be found **online**.

Bijou Bike Park set to transform SLT cycling



Matt Stuck works to get Bijou Bike Park in South Lake Tahoe ready to open Sept. 19. Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

To the uninitiated, Bijou Bike Park doesn't look like it's anywhere near finished. And, yet, it's opening today in South Lake Tahoe.

To the cyclist who is well versed in these types of things, the park looks phenomenal. Some of those riders have been testing the various features.

Matt Stuck, a volunteer with Bijou Bike Park Association, was reshaping one of the jumps earlier this week because on a test run the land was "heavy on the feet." The solution – make it steeper.

He expected the landing to be 8½-feet-tall, with a 6-foot-tall

lip by the time he was done. Cyclists will come off the wood 6-footer, turn about 40 degrees in midair to land on the dirt embankment.



Ben Fish demonstrates the teeter-totter.

If that sounds too gnarly, there are tamer routes to take. This particular feature is on the big line. There are small and medium lines, as well.

Stuck on Sept. 16 gave the group attending the Tahoe Talk a preview of the route. With ease he flew through the air, scooted along the dirt, and played on the cedar obstacles. One is called the Hammock – but this 36-foot structure is no place to be dozing off.

“It’s like a roller coaster,” Stuck told *Lake Tahoe News* of the route.

Pete Fink, a member of the city’s Parks and Recreation Commission, said kids are building more dangerous things in the woods. The park brings a more controlled environment to this type of fun.

The features have a metal frame with cedar on the top and anchors into the soil. Most of the landings are hard, compacted dirt.

Ben Fish since 2011 has been the driving force behind the park. He is president of Tahoe Area Mountain Biking Association as well as the nonprofit Bijou Bike Park Association. It is members of the latter who worked with the city of South Lake Tahoe to bring the nearly 5-acre park to fruition at a cost of about $200,000.



Riders will enter the Hammock from the feature on the right.

The contractor is the same group that has built the last three Olympic BMX tracks – including the one in Brazil.

“The city stepped up and took a chance,” Fish said. When the process started there were 35 such parks in the country, now there are about 100.

But it wasn’t easy. Often times cycling is seen as a second-class sport in Lake Tahoe compared to ball fields. Those get built at a cost $1 million, and hundreds of thousands of dollars have regularly been going into field improvements.

The bike park has a trail around the outside that is one-third of a mile. Near the entrance is a small pump track, with the larger one to the left in the trees. The intent of a pump track is that you don’t need to pedal.

The three slopestyle routes are similar to the concept of slopestyle on snow where riders will go over a slew of features.

The BMX track is 1,000-feet long – a couple hundred feet longer than the current one near South Tahoe Middle School that will be coming out this fall. The Bijou track has a slurry seal on it.

All of the attractions are free and open during the hours of the larger park. Everyone, no matter one’s age, must wear a helmet.

Fish anticipates daily maintenance will be required. His association is looking for volunteers.

The park opens today after the 50th anniversary parade that starts at 10am at the Y and finishes at Bijou Community Park.

Northstar tennis tourney an international affair

TRUCKEE – A bevy of top ranked players played in last weekend’s 35th annual Northstar Open Tennis Tournament.

Players were locals, from the Bay Area and international, including Belarus Davis Cup player Anton Stryhas.

There was prize money in the Open Division.

French talent Sylvan Malroux and Moez Chargui, former No. 1 player for UNR, won the final match of the day in a thrilling 7-5, 6-4 contest over Guillaume Tonelli and Philip Frayssinoux.

Local Northstar director and teammates Zeke Straw and Eric Park's won the 4.5 men's doubles 6-3, 6-2 over Ray Fugitt and Ross Rittiman who play for Zephyr Cove Tennis Club.

Men's 4.0 singles was won by local icon John Doughery. Ryan Johnson of South Lake Tahoe claimed the title in men's 4.5 singles by defeating Mert Ceglar of Reno 6-3, 6-2.

In the 5.0 mixed doubles, the husband-wife combo of Stryhas and Maryia Meliuk (former No. 1 player for Sac State) prevailed over Straw and Holly Tretten from Reno.

– Provided to Lake Tahoe News

Time to cleanup Tahoe basin waterways

The Great Sierra River Clean Up is Sept. 19.

There will be cleanup sites at various locations all around the basin, with more than 10 sites in South Shore, including Kiva Beach, Regan Beach, Trout Creek, and the Upper Truckee River.

Click here to see a list of all the available sites, cleanup times, and to register. Cleanup supplies will be provided and all ages are welcome.

Start times vary by site, but most begin at 2pm.

The event is part of a larger effort, the Great Sierra River Cleanup, where volunteers will clean waterways all across the Sierra Nevada from Mt. Whitney to Lassen National Park.

Great Basin National Park – an intergalactic planetarium



Great Basin National Park in Nevada is known for its dark skies. Photo/National Park Service

By Kyle Roerink, Las Vegas Sun

GREAT BASIN NATIONAL PARK – The 60-foot laser beam streaked like a lightsaber across the night sky, playing connect-the-dots with constellations in the plane of the Milky Way.

On a hillside 300 miles northeast of Las Vegas in the Great

Basin National Park, Derek Demeter controlled the light with shifts of his wrist. Each movement sent the laser on a light-years' long course.

It was 10pm on a recent weekend and 300 park guests craned their necks toward the heavens. Some peered through telescopes and others followed the vivid path of Demeter's wand. Faces weren't visible, but the stars, the Milky Way and distant galaxies were.

Read the whole story

Carson City lands major mountain bike event

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

On Wednesday Epic Rides announced plans to launch the Carson City Off Road, a three-day event that will include single-track riding and racing, a bike expo and music festival.

The event is the result of a five-year agreement between Tucson-based Epic Rides, Carson City and the Carson City Visitors Bureau. The two local entities will cover costs associated with hosting, everything from traffic and crowd control to staging for entertainment. Travel Nevada also contributed a matching grant.

The inaugural event is expected to fill up with 600 riders and, based on experiences with other Epic Rides events, could draw as many as 2,000 by 2021, the end of the contract. It could mean as much as $15 million to the local economy.

Read the whole story

Sports books see double standard in fantasy leagues

By Associated Press

Think wagering $20 to win $1 million by picking a winning combination of NFL players for a fantasy team on Sunday is gambling? The league says it isn’t.

So do fast-growing daily fantasy sports companies like DraftKings and FanDuel that offer the games and advertise with the long gambling-averse pro football organization.

But as the lucrative NFL betting season ramps up and advertisements from DraftKings and FanDuel are as hard to miss as an extra point, Las Vegas casinos and sports books are feeling like they’re on the wrong end of a double standard. Traditional sports betting is barred outside a handful of states, but daily fantasy sports are allowed in most of the United States.

Seizing on the disparity, traditional casino operators and sports books are calling for traditional sports betting to be given the same respect. “Let’s just call it what it is. Americans love to bet on sports,” said Joe Asher, chief executive of sports book William Hill’s U.S. operations. “They both drive interest in the games and they both should be legal and taxed and regulated.”

The fantasy industry says it’s already legal and has no interest in being regulated if it comes with a “gambling”

label. Even the traditional casino companies and regulators have eschewed the word “gambling” until recently, opting for the more antiseptic “gaming” instead to describe what they do.

Daily fantasy sports and their defenders point to a 2006 law, the Unlawful Internet Gambling Enforcement Act, which carved out an exemption for “fantasy sports” well before the concept of daily games, versus week-long or season-long, were contemplated. Before the rise of daily fantasy sports, the exception was mostly used by season-long fantasy operators like Yahoo and CBS Sports.

“Thanks to fantasy sports being specifically excluded from laws affecting online sports betting, FanDuel is not illegal in any way. Trust us, our lawyers drive very nice cars so that we can keep it that way,” FanDuel says on its website as its short answer for the frequently asked question, “Is FanDuel Legal?”

FanDuel’s long answer is more complicated, noting it doesn’t operate in several states where its legality is not as clear.

Some regulators and legal analysts have been skeptical of that reasoning because of state laws governing gambling. That has left casinos on the sideline, wanting to get involved or support fantasy sports but unwilling to invest or risk billions in revenues that come with highly-regulated casino-resorts. New Jersey regulators even gave the go-ahead to licensed casinos to operate their own daily fantasy sports games two years ago, but no one has done it.

“The exception doesn’t necessarily get (fantasy sports companies) to where they say it does,” said A.G. Burnett, Nevada’s top gambling regulator, who is working with the state’s attorney general to weigh the industry’s legality.

The federal law applies to processing payments for online gambling to curb online sports betting and, to that end, allows fantasy sports companies to process transactions. But

Burnett said it doesn’t pre-empt other laws.

“If a state says fantasy sports is illegal … the fantasy companies cannot use (the act) as a get out of jail card because it quite simply doesn’t apply,” he said.

So far, there have been no prosecutions challenging the sites’ abilities to legally operate.

FanDuel and DraftKings responded in a joint statement Saturday affirming their belief that they don’t offer “gambling.”

“We are speaking with gaming industry representatives to educate them on the fantasy sports industry as our products are games of skill; fundamentally separate from, and not competitive with casinos and gaming businesses,” the statement said.

John McManus, general counsel for MGM Resorts International, said the company that owns several casinos on the Las Vegas Strip has a similar position on fantasy sports as it does with all forms of gambling.

“It is not in the interests of consumers that established gaming companies, which are fully licensed and regulated, are the only market participants that cannot engage in the business,” he said.

No one wants daily fantasy to be shut down akin to prohibition or the likes of Internet poker several years ago, said Daniel Wallach, a gambling and sports attorney based in Florida.

“This is something that everybody partakes in,” said Wallach, a sports betting panelist at the upcoming Global Gaming Expo convention in Las Vegas, the top yearly casino industry conference. “It would not be a popular thing to prosecute.”

Traditional gambling companies, though, don’t want to risk lucrative gambling licenses by dipping their toes in the fantasy pool, Wallach said.

The debate about “gambling” versus “gaming” often centers on chance versus skill.

“It’s more skill than luck,” said Peter Schoenke, chairman of the Fantasy Sports Trade Association and founder of Rotowire.com, a fantasy sports news website. “You win by making good decisions about players. You have to do a whole bunch of work to play the game, let alone win.”

The NFL has agreed. “Daily fantasy is considered a game of skill and not gambling,” said Brian McCarthy, an NFL spokesman.

“What we’re doing is a game of skill, too,” said Johnny Avello, the longtime sports book director at the Wynn Las Vegas. “So why not just legalize it all,” he said.

Pesticide to be used to decrease plague risk

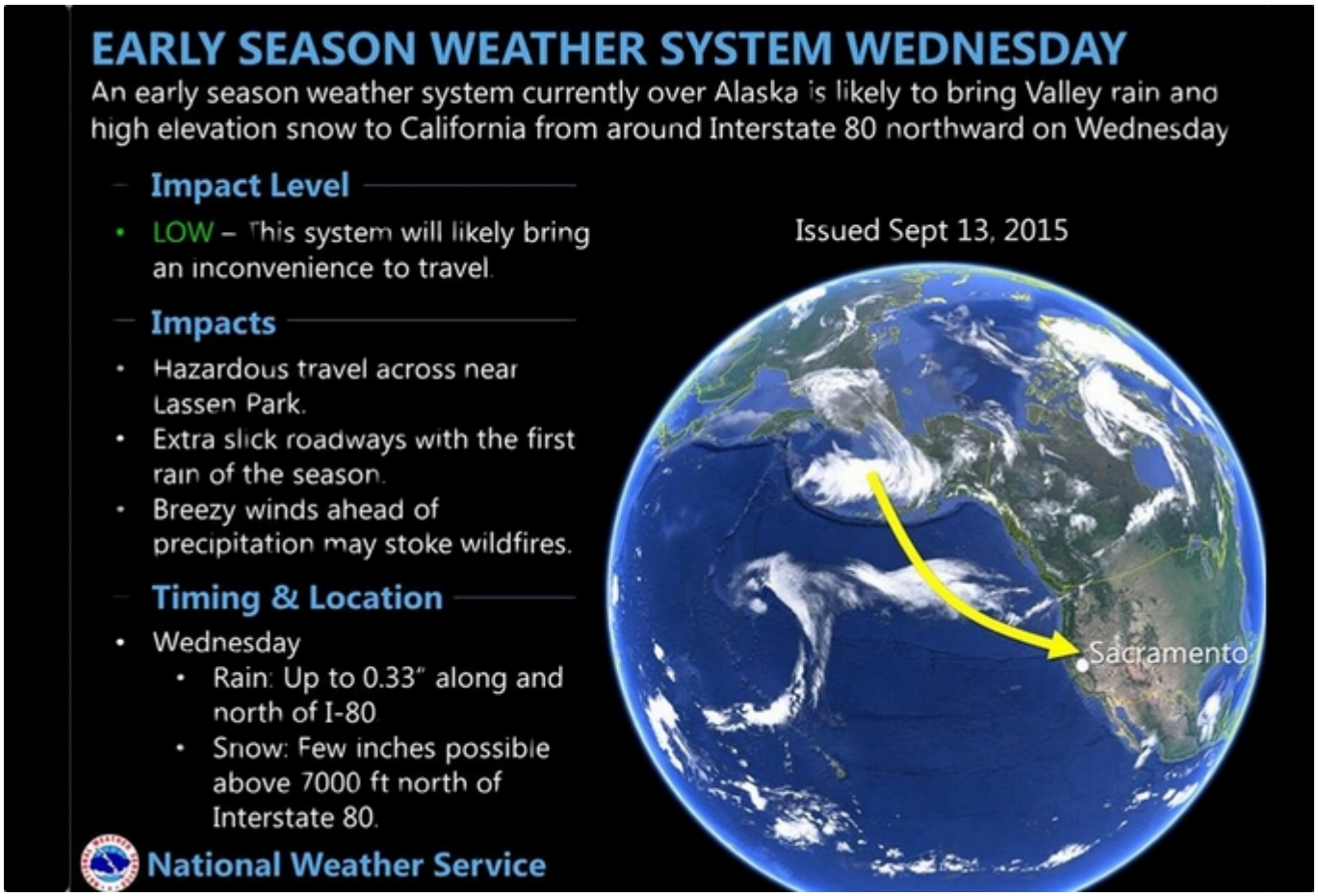
The U.S. Forest Service will close several of its South Shore recreation sites Sept. 16, weather permitting, to allow county and state public health and vector control officials to conduct pesticide treatments to reduce plague risk.

Officials will dust all rodent burrows with a pesticide to reduce infestations of fleas that can carry plague.

The gates to Tallac Historic Site, Kiva Beach and Picnic Area, Valhalla and the Taylor Creek Visitor Center are expected reopen Thursday morning. The Pope-Baldwin Bike Trail will remain open, but signs will be posted where the trail crosses closed sites.

A dead California ground squirrel found at the Kiva picnic area adjacent to the Tallac Historic Site tested positive for plague in August.

First snow of season in forecast for Tahoe area



Winter may arrive before fall in Lake Tahoe.

The National Weather Service in Reno is calling for a few inches of snow above the 7,000 foot level north of Interstate 80 on Sept. 16.

A chance of thunderstorms is possible for Monday and Wednesday

in the basin and Truckee areas. Temperatures at the lake will dip to the high 50s.

A lake wind advisory is in effect from 11am Monday to 11pm Tuesday. Waves could reach 4 feet.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Added salt not always good for athletes

By Erin Beresini, Outside

Been popping salt pills like M&Ms during long workouts thinking they'll do your body good?

You might want to think again: According to St. Louis University nutrition and dietetics professor, Ted Weiss, extra sodium from concentrated sources like salt capsules doesn't actually enhance athletic performance. In fact, downing the pills may even cause hypertension.

"A lot of sports nutrition practices directly contradict what we know about positive health practices," Weiss says. "Just because something makes you run faster doesn't mean it's healthy. Cocaine does that too, but that doesn't mean it's good for you."

For years, the FDA has recommended Americans take in no more than 2,300 milligrams of sodium per day. But endurance athletes can easily exceed that amount when they gulp electrolyte capsules during exercise—some pills are stuffed with more than 200 milligrams of sodium each.

Read the whole story