Study: Illegal Super Bowl bets will total $3.8 bil.

By J.D. Morris, Las Vegas Sun

Americans will illegally wager 38 times more money on this year's Super Bowl than they will legally in Nevada, the only state with full-fledged sports betting, according to a projection from a casino industry trade group.

American Gaming Association President Geoff Freeman told a gathering of mayors in Washington, D.C., on Thursday that his organization expects the Super Bowl to elicit $3.8 billion in illegal wagers compared with Nevada's legal $100 million.

Freeman said the estimate on those illegal bets was a first for his organization, but his prepared remarks didn't specify how they determined that number.

Read the whole story

Holland on podium at X Games

Nate Holland of Squaw Valley took home the bronze Friday in snowboardcross at the X Games in Aspen.

This is an event the three-time Olympian has won seven times.

Canada's Kevin Hill took gold, while Italy's Omar Visintin placed second. silver.

On the women's side, Lindsey Jacobellis won her ninth title, giving her the most gold medals for a woman of an X Games.

Canadian Dominique Maltais took second, followed by France's Nelly Moenne-Loccoz.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

S. Tahoe's Smaine wins first World Championship

By USSA

KREISCHBERG, Austria – Twenty-three-year-old Kyle Smaine (South Lake Tahoe) dominated Kreischberg's halfpipe competition to earn his first World Championships title Jan. 22.

Smaine led the competition from start to finish, earning the top spot in Wednesday's qualifiers and putting down an unbeatable first run in Thursday night's finals that would ultimately earn him the gold.

While Smaine was the obvious winner on the night, silver medalist Joffrey Pollet-Villard of France took home the honor of crowd favorite with huge amplitude and an alley-oop flat 540. Bronze went to Switzerland's Yannic Lerjen who bumped Broby Leeds (Vail) off the podium on his third and final run.

Truckee's Davis on top of podium at X Games

By USSA

ASPEN, Colo. – There was no lack of drama in the X Games men's superpipe final on Thursday night in Aspen, Colo., with the defending X Games gold medalist pitted against a reigning Olympic gold medalist and a 15-time X Games champion. The result? Danny Davis (Truckee) won his second straight superpipe gold medal at X Games in Aspen.

Davis, Switzerland's Iouri Podladtchikov, and Shaun White (Calrsbad) headlined the eight-man finals showdown in Buttermilk's halfpipe. And this year in Aspen, the halfpipe was primed and athletes were excited about the quality of the venue.

"This is by far my favorite halfpipe of any X Games," says White. "They did a great job with getting the halfpipe ready."

Early Thursday evening, a field of 16 snowboarders was paired down to eight during a tense and entertaining superpipe elimination round. Riders used their best score of two runs in the elimination.

Then, under bright lights, with cameras pointed at them, and in front of thousands of screaming fans lining the halfpipe's walls and cheering from the bullpen at the bottom of the venue, the eight world-class snowboarders put on a clinic during the superpipe final.

Just like last year, Davis displayed a technical approach to halfpipe riding that the X Games judges rewarded with a score of 93.66, enough to solidify his second consecutive gold medal in X Games superpipe. While he put down different tricks and stomped all three of his runs in the finals, Davis still

needed his third attempt down the halfpipe to win another gold medal.

“Before I dropped in [on my third run of the finals] I was just thinking that I needed to land a solid one because the first two had their glitches,” said Davis. “I landed three different runs in the finals. It’s hard for me to do the same run just because of boredom.”

The run that earned Davis his hardware included a nose-grab backside 720 to a stylish and vintage Davis switch method, followed immediately by a cab 1080 and a perfect frontside 1080 double cork on his last hit. In addition to winning the gold medal, Davis’s last run also bumped legendary White off the podium. The silver and bronze X Games medals in superpipe were awarded to Japan’s Taku Hiraoka and Podladtchikov, respectively.

“This win was unexpected because I haven’t ridden much halfpipe this season,” said Davis. “But it started to feel like I was getting into a flow towards the end of qualis and then I had a lot of fun.”

Screw up on Super Bowl point spread could cost casinos

By Cork Gaines, Business Insider

With 10 days to go before the Super Bowl, there is no favorite to win the big game. But it didn’t start out that way, and that could spell disaster for Las Vegas sportsbooks.

Shortly after the New England Patriots completed their

destruction of the Indianapolis Colts in the AFC Championship game, the 2015 Super Bowl opened with the Seattle Seahawks as 2.5- or 3-point favorites, depending on where you looked.

However, in the first 24 hours of betting, the line fell all the way to a pick ’em (no favorite), a surprisingly big move for a point spread and a rare miss by Las Vegas.

Read the whole story

White back on his board with something to prove

By Matt Higgins, New York Times

Stowing his side projects as a mogul and a musician for a moment, Shaun White was back on his snowboard beneath the lights at Buttermilk Mountain in Aspen, Colo., on Monday night, launching himself from the halfpipe during practice for this week’s Winter X Games.

A dominant and decorated competitor for a decade in a young sport, White, 28, is scheduled to compete in the superpipe final tonight to open the Games, which run through Sunday. It will be his first competition, and a chance to reaffirm his stature, since he finished a disappointing fourth in the men’s halfpipe final at the Sochi Olympics last February.

“This season is not a big contest year for me,” said White, who has remained busy with his many outside interests, including playing guitar and touring with his band, Bad Things, which released a self-titled debut album last year on the Warner Bros. label.

Last year, White, who used to ride for Northstar, bought a majority stake in Air & Style, a competitive snowboarding series and music festival with events in Austria and China. He has expanded the franchise to the United States, where it will take place at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, Calif., on Feb. 21. He is also chief executive of Shaun White Enterprises, an umbrella organization for his sponsorships with Target, Burton Snowboards, Oakley sunglasses and others.

Read the whole story

Bowman wins 3rd consecutive gold at X Games

By USSA

ASPEN, Colo. – The first day of X Games 2015 is in the books, and the women's superpipe gold medal is in familiar territory. In a field stocked full of eight world-class freeskiers from countries spanning the world, Maddie Bowman (Meyers) stomped her first run through Buttermilk's halfpipe to win another gold medal.

Brita Sigourney (Carmel) took third.

For the first time since the late Sarah Burke won back-to-back-to-back X Games gold medals in the halfpipe, Bowman won her third consecutive X Games gold medal on Wednesday night in Aspen. Considering Bowman also won Olympic gold in Sochi in the same event, it is fair to say that women's halfpipe skiing has a true champion representing the sport.

"Tonight was awesome, and I can't believe it happened," said

Bowman. “I grew up idolizing Sarah Burke, and the first time I met her was at X Games. Sarah is the reason we’re here. To win X Games three times in a row, like Sarah, is pretty special.”

Bowman’s winning run came on her first attempt of three through the halfpipe. Exhibiting technical tricks, large amplitude, and stylish grabs throughout her entire run, Bowman compiled a winning scored of 85.66. Bowman linked a right-side 900 with a left-side 540 and then later nailed a left-side 900 and right-side 720 in succession to show she can spin in both directions. The spinning combinations, switch takeoffs and landings, down-the-pipe airs, and unparalleled style proved to be a winning equation for Bowman, again.

“The secret for winning is just having fun,” Bowman said at the bottom of the halfpipe, another gold around her neck. “When you’re having a great time with your friends is when you ski the best.”

Rounding out the podium behind Bowman were Japan’s Olympic bronze medalist Ayana Onozuka in second and Sigourney in third, respectively. Both women went into their third runs through the halfpipe with the ability to outscore Bowman, and both athletes put in solid attempts. In the end, however, Bowman’s score proved to be too much.

“To win a medal here is a great honor,” says Bowman. “Tonight was really special.”

Tahoe’s Franco takes 6th in

slopestyle

By USSA

KREISCHBERG, Austria – In a history-making FIS World Championship effort, 23-year-old Noah Wallace (Spokane) earned his first World Championship medal in slopestyle skiing –taking bronze.

Wallace put down the third best run of the day, topping off a 82.40 run with a switch leftside double cork 1080 on the last hit. Competition favorite and top-ranked skier Australian Russ Henshaw, put down three 90-point runs to easily secure second place, but ultimately the day would belong to Swiss skier Fabian Boesch.

Boesch put together an unbeatable combination with a switch double misty 1260 Japan to a right double-corked 1260 to earn his first FIS World Championships title.

“I had a lot of fun today,” said Wallace, who has only been competing in World Cups since 2013. “It was a great time skiing. The course was awesome and the jumps were pristine. I loved today.”

Wallace wasn’t the only American with a good result. Three landed in the top 15: Robby Franco (Lake Tahoe) was sixth, Colby Stevenson (Park City) eighth and Matthew Walker (Aspen) 13. On the women’s side, Nadia Gonzales (Angel Fire, N.M.) was 11 and Jamie Crane-Mauzy (Park City) 13. Lisa Zimmerman of Germany took first, Katie Summerhayes of Great Britain second and Zuzana Stromkova of Slovakia third.

This was Wallace’s first World Championships, and first World Champs medal.

Demand for backcountry-like terrain prompts resorts to up the ante inbounds

By Avery Stonich, Outdoor

When the new Kachina Peak lift opens at Taos Ski Valley this season, inbound skiers and riders will gain access to prime terrain once reserved only for those willing to hike to the top. The triple chair will whisk people up to 12,450 feet, just shy of the Kachina Peak summit, increasing Taos' advanced and expert lift-serviced terrain by 50 percent.

"Kachina offers an adventure similar to backcountry skiing and riding, and we know many of our visitors are actively seeking more of that type of experience," says Jesse Keaveny, chief marketing officer for Taos Ski Valley. "By adding the lift, we provide snowsports enthusiasts that thrill of untamed expert terrain, but in a more accessible – and controlled – way."

Taos isn't the only resort trying to bring backcountry-like experiences to its customers. According to National Ski Areas Association data, inbound snowsports visits dropped almost 10 percent from 2010-11 to 2013-14. While back-to-back dismal snow years in some regions (looking at you, California) take some of the blame, the improved performance of backcountry gear has allowed more skiers and riders to feed their stoke beyond resort boundaries. Backcountry gear sales have jumped nearly eight percent since 2011-12 and sales of hybrid alpine/AT boots have quintupled during the last four years, according to Snowsports Industries America.

Read the whole story

U.S. Treasury seeks to guard against illegal sports wagers

By Brett Wolf, Reuters

The U.S. Treasury Department's anti-money laundering unit may soon ask casinos to be on the lookout for illegal sports wagers flowing into the U.S. financial system, according to two sources familiar with the matter.

The goal is to stifle illegal sports bets that cause billions of dollars in funds, much of it with unknown origins, to move through the U.S. banking system, according to the sources, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they are not authorized to discuss the matter publicly.

Guidance from Treasury's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) is expected to highlight for casinos "red flags" signaling possible illicit sports betting activity so it can be reported to authorities. One example might be unusually large wagers, a sign that bets are being pooled, said one of the sources.

Read the whole story