Ski company to offer MLB team logos as topsheets

By Matt Hansen, Powder

The month of October holds many promises. Heroes are made under Friday night lights. Hunters march into the woods for meat, others harvest vegetables from the garden. It’s the best time of year to go fishing, and the best excuse to dress up and howl at the moon.

It’s also the beginning of ski season, as we saw last Friday with the opening of Colorado’s A-Basin. The 10th month also means it’s time for the Fall Classic.

To help celebrate, Park City-based RAMP Sports has developed a licensing deal with Major League Baseball to provide topsheets sporting the colors and logos of all 30 teams.

Read the whole story

Skiing doesn’t have to break the bank

By Frederick Reimers, Outside

The ticket-window price at major ski resorts this season will be well north of $100, especially during peak times like Christmas and Presidents Day weekend. That’s not to mention the $7 pints of beer, $12 burgers and that $10 can of peanuts you can’t resist grabbing from the minibar at 1am after bar hopping through quaint, snowy streets. But it is possible to

cut some costs.

The best deals are always going to be season passes or multi-resort pass deals like the Mountain Collective and the Epic Pass. But if you can't commit to that much resort riding, you should still buy your day-tickets now.



The Fairmont at Whistler is on the slopes of the ski resort. Photo/LTN file

"Buying your tickets in advance is just as important to cost savings as is skiing at off-peak times," says Evan Reece, CEO of Liftopia, an online broker of lift tickets similar to airline ticket aggregators like Kayak.com and Skyscanner.com. "The earlier you purchase, the cheaper it will be."

While you can buy slightly discounted advance tickets on the websites of major resorts like Vail and Jackson Hole, it's a good idea to check out Liftopia first. They sell tickets for as much as 85 percent off face value for days when demand is projected to be low (think the Tuesday after Presidents Day weekend) at 250 resorts worldwide.

The problem with advanced tickets, however, is weather. Say its 20 below, or there's freezing rain glazing the chairlifts, and you rightly decide to stay in the hot tub all day instead of skiing. You'll have to eat the cost of the ticket. Or at least you would have in previous years. This season, however, Liftopia is adding flexibility to their model with two new

tiers of pricing that allow purchasers to change their lift ticket to a different day without an additional fee. The “Value Plus” ticket will cost a bit more and allow a single date change. The “Flexible” option allows unlimited changes, though in both cases the buyer is responsible for the difference in cost if there is one.

Read the whole story

Free firewood near Wrights Lake

The Wrights Lake Recreation Area on the Eldorado National Forest will be open to free public firewood gathering on Oct. 25-26 and Nov. 1-2 from 9am-4pm.

Woodcutters will be issued a free permit on site.

The area was severely damaged last winter when more than 200 trees fell during extremely high winds. The storm caused extensive damage to the campground, picnic areas and trails in the area.

Forest Service district employees worked hard last spring to make the area safe by hosting a special clean-up event where members of the community were allowed to remove numerous loads of wood under permit. The area, though, is still littered with a large number of downed trees.

The following rules will be in effect during the event:

· Free Permit is for personal use only. No commercial wood

gathering for resale will be allowed.

· No early entry will be allowed.

· Recreation activities will be restricted during this event to provide for public safety. Access to the Rockbound and Twin Lakes trail heads will be allowed.

· Wood cutters must remain on existing paved roads, pull-outs and spurs, and must not block roads, gates or closure barriers.

· Only newly wind downed logs will be permitted for cutting. Older weathered logs must be left on site.

· Woodcutters must check out and exit the gate prior to 4pm each day.

·Members of the public not honoring these rules will be asked to leave.

Truckee Olympian relives race for hometown

By Kathryn Reed

TRUCKEE – It wasn't competing in the Olympics that stressed out Travis Ganong, it was the anxiety of being named to the U.S. team.

"It was stressful the whole season last year during World Cup leading up to the Olympics," the Truckee native told a crowd of supporters. "Once I made the team, I was relaxed and had fun."

The most fun was walking in during the Opening Ceremonies – seeing the crowd, being with the other athletes, all those flashbulbs going off. After that, it was all about work. After all, his event was the next day.

But he met his goal at the time – make it to the Olympics. He placed fifth in the downhill, four-tenths of a second from gold, seven-one hundredths from bronze.

“It was frustrating, but it gives me motivation,” the 26-year-old said.



Olympian Travis Ganong returns home to Truckee on Oct. 14 to talk about skiing. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Dressed in a beanie with USA across the front, the speed skier enlightened the Truckee-Donner Chamber of Commerce breakfast attendees about the Olympics, his life and future goals.

In Russia he was not able to complete his final training run because his ski popped off near the top of the course. Ganong admits this may have helped save his legs.

While he has hit 100 mph on the racecourse, at the Olympics he was in the 80s.

A video of his Olympic race was shown for the group last week, with many oohs and aahs as he flew over huge jumps that at times had him in the air for hundreds of yards.

“That course was very challenging,” Ganong said, with turns and steeps that pushed the racers.

Ganong doesn’t set seasonal goals, but instead he has more of a career vision. He hopes to keep racing at this caliber for another eight to 10 years. After that he plans to stay in the industry in some capacity. Taking courses in ski management at Sierra Nevada College will be in his future.

Winning the men’s World Cup downhill title is the big dream. No U.S. man has done so. Daron Rahlves, who raced for Sugar Bowl, placed second. (Two U.S. women have won it – Tamara McKinney of Squaw Valley and Lindsay Vonn of Vail.)

This summer Ganong worked on his starts. He calls them his “Achilles’ heel” and the one area he could have shaved time in Sochi earlier this year. Training in the giant slalom was another focus this summer. Much of the summer is spent in Chile and New Zealand preparing for the upcoming season.

While he still calls Truckee home, as do his parents, the ski season is primarily in Europe. This year is unusual with two events at Beaver Creek, Colo.

Ganong said with FIS (International Ski Federation) leaders being European it’s hard to generate interest in hosting World Cup events in the United States. Plus, he added, most U.S. resorts don’t want to shut down the bulk of their mountain for these races. (Squaw will be hosting a World Cup skiercross race this season.)

He started with the U.S. Ski Team’s developmental team at age 15 after learning how to ski at Squaw. There he participated in various levels of competition. For the last five years he has been on the World Cup circuit.

U.S. athletes have a harder time securing sponsorships. Then there are limits to how much of his clothing can be covered. For example, the FIS allows only one headgear sponsor and then

dictates the size. Ganong is still looking to fill that spot.

One thing that has changed is the shape of skis. There is less of a side cut, more old school.

“With side cut, you get crazy pressure on your knees,” Ganong said. “There are fewer injuries (now).”

After the Olympics, Ganong competed the next weekend – securing his first World Cup podium.

The first downhill World Cup race this season is in December in Lake Louise, Canada.

Amgen women racers coming to Tahoe in 2015



Amgen 2011 was snowed out. Photo/Lisa J. Tolda/Copyright

Amgen Tour of California is taking another chance on Lake Tahoe.

The first two stages of the expanded women’s portion of the 2015 race will be hosted by South Lake Tahoe on May 8-9. The

competition will continue in Sacramento on May 10, with a third racing stage, the same day as the overall men's start of the Amgen Tour of California.

In 2011, when there was only a men's race, is was to have started in Stateline, with the second day starting in Squaw Valley. But snow changed those plans.

"Hosting the first two segments of the women's race for the Amgen Tour of California's 10th anniversary provides an opportunity to challenge these athletes with our natural environment while elevating awareness of women's racing as a prestigious sport," Carol Chaplin, executive director of the Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority, said in a statement.

Apps, hardware keep track of the ski day

By Heather Somerville, San Jose Mercury News

At the end of a long day on the slopes, there's only one reward as sweet as a cold beer and a fireplace to warm your toes – recounting your epic moves through the powder.

"You won't believe the air I caught!"

"Did you see how fast I took that tree run?"



At the end of a ski day, Shirley Hackett goes over her Epic Mix account online. Photo/LTN file

But with a growing number of mobile apps, high-tech goggles and other digital devices that can measure with precision all the moves down a mountain, old-fashioned storytelling with friends and family may not cut it anymore. GoPros and iPhones have long helped athletes record their mountain adventures, but more serious skiers are pushing their limits with gadgets – possibly even Google Glass – that offer skiers a wealth of data about their technique on the trail.

The "quantified self" movement, which emerged as smartphones became more ubiquitous and wearable devices such as the Fitbit grew in popularity, has invaded resorts across the globe, adding competitive aspects and measurable performance gains to the sport. Although many embraced skiing for the chance to be in the mountains, disconnected, alone at the crest of an untracked bowl, even these snow-sport athletes are adopting technology to measure every turn and trick in hopes of quantifying a sport that has for so long been measured by gut feelings.

"You get this emotional feeling, like 'Wow, that might have been the best powder run I've ever done.' But then you think, 'A lot of runs feel that way, and they can't all be the best,' " said David Lokshin, co-founder of AlpineReplay, a Southern California company that makes Trace, an app to track ski

performance and a sensor that sticks to a ski or snowboard and can identify and record airborne tricks

The data the Trace app collects can then be examined and shared, offering new potential bragging rights and quantifiable improvement.

Read the whole story

Tallac Site upgrades may start in 2015

Work to revitalize the Tallac Historic Site could begin in May.

“This project will reduce environmental impacts and improve recreational opportunities at the Tallac Historic Site,” Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit Forest Supervisor Nancy Gibson said in a press release. “Upgrading these facilities will help us meet current and projected recreational demands and comply with legal requirements for accessibility.”

Depending on funding, the work could take a decade to complete.

The Forest Service will implement a variety of water quality projects, upgrade paths, improve accessibility, install informational signs and remove some user-created trails removed. Crews will construct a split-rail fence between the Tallac Point beach area and the Taylor Creek Marsh and a restroom will be built near the parking area.

The project will improve vehicle circulation by reconfiguring the three entrances along Highway 89 (Valhalla, Tallac Site,

and Taylor Creek Visitor Center) into two entrances connected by an internal road, which allows visitors to enter the site and access all areas without returning to the highway. Parking areas at the Tallac and Valhalla sites will expand and the existing unimproved parking area near the Valhalla entrance will be paved.

The project will also include construction of a non-motorized, multi-use trail adjacent to the new internal road and parking lot access roads.

Tahoe's colors unfold on West Shore paddle



There is no question why people call Lake Tahoe blue. Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

HOMEWOOD – Judging by the water's colors it could have been the Caribbean. Based on the number of boats it was clearly post-Labor Day. A headwind in both directions – it must be Lake Tahoe.

We opt to head south from the West Shore Café in Homewood to tackle a section of the lake we have not paddled before. Normally this is a pretty narrow section of rocky beach on the West Shore. The drought has even more land exposed.

From the get-go things are different than other mooring areas at Tahoe. The abundance of sailboats is noticeable. Too bad their owners are nowhere to be found because on this particular Monday in mid-September the wind is more suitable for their craft than our canoe.



Expansive view of Tahoe from the pier at Sugar Pine Point State Park

But we don't let that bother us.

We have all day to churn away at what is mostly a rough lake. We had thought we might take a break at Chamber's Landing on the way back, but it's already closed for the season.

It's not until one is on the water that the actual contours of the shoreline are revealed. Driving this section of Highway 89, while scenic, doesn't do justice to the twists and turns that can be encountered while on the water.

It made for some nice reprieves from the wind as we paddled into little inlets.



Chamber’s Landing with the runs of Homewood to the right.

But rounding a rocky bend the wind was like an assault on our muscles as we had to dig in hard to make forward progress, all the while keeping an eye on the waves hitting the canoe at odd angles.

An expansive stretch of sand unfolded in front of us. We knew we had met our destination – Sugar Pine Point State Park.

Via car this is about three miles from the café.

We pull the canoe on shore and then walk to the pier. Several people are milling about the grounds near the Ehrman mansion.

The water here is an emerald reminiscent of the tropics. The temperature, though, is the opposite.

We didn’t want to linger too long because the wind was not dying down. We strategize on how best to navigate around the rocks, contend with waves that could tip us and a swirling wind. We make it around the bend into calmer water. But that tailwind we were counting on as we headed back had shifted to be a headwind – again.



Rough water makes for a bit of a challenging paddle

Still, going back we had Homewood Mountain Resort ahead and to our left. Those runs look like they are about to drop into the lake – similar to what it's like when schussing down them.

We had thought about stopping at Obexer's for lunch, but we were so tired we were afraid if we stopped, we might leave the canoe there. It was going to be easier to walk down there for a sandwich and bring it back to eat in our room at the West Shore Inn.

By this time looking at the lake seemed so much more appealing than being on it. A headwind in both directions can have that affect on a paddler.



West Shore Cafe and Inn

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Getting there:

From South Lake Tahoe, go north on Highway 89. West Shore Café is on the right across from Homewood Mountain Resort. There is

plenty of parking now because the café is closed until Nov. 24.

Eldorado National Forest to begin pile burns

The U.S. Forest Service will begin its fall prescribed burn program in the Eldorado National Forest next week with 250 acres of the Iron Trap Understory Burn project located along the eastern end of the Mormon Emigrant Trail.

At 6,800 to 7,600 feet the weather and forest conditions on the Iron Trap project is significantly cooler and moister than the lower elevations of the forest where the King Fire burned.

Prescribed fires and pile burning are intended to reduce the amount of vegetation, such as needles, small plants, brush, and small trees, which can carry fire from the forest floor into the canopy.

For additional information, call Nickie Washington at 530.621.5237 or email at nickielwashington@fs.fed.us.

Time to clean the trails at Sierra

Sierra-at-Tahoe’s Keep Sierra Clean Day is Oct. 19.

Staff and volunteers will hit the trails to pick up trash before the snow falls.

Registration begins at 10am, with the lift spinning at 10:30am.

Sierra will provide a free lunch, live music and giveaways on the Solstice Plaza. The event goes until 3pm.

In addition, there will be a ski swap in the parking lot from 2-3pm.