Ganong 5th in downhill; no medals for U.S.

By USSA

ROSA KHUTOR, Russia -– Travis Ganong (Squaw Valley) charged to fifth on the steep and fast course of the 2014 Sochi downhill on Sunday, pulling out the best finish of his career during his first Olympic appearance.

Ganong skied into the lead, but was then bumped by Norwegian Kjetil Jansrud, who took bronze behind gold winner Matthias Mayer of Austria and silver medalist Christof Innerhofer of Italy.

Pre-race favorite Bode Miller (Franconia, N.H.) skied a fast and tight line but plowed through a panel and lost time, finishing eighth.

After a slow start, Ganong charged the bottom of the course to win the last two intervals and finish in the lead.

Ganong entered the Olympics with a career-best weekend in Kitbuehel, finishing seventh in downhill and sixth in super G.

“I had no idea what I would feel like kicking out of the starting gate today. I just let myself relax and let my skiing take over,” Ganong said. “My run was awesome. I did basically what I wanted to do. I pushed hard. I pushed huge off the jumps and had a smile on my face when I finished.”

Clouds moved into Rosa Khutor for the first time in four days, creating different light conditions from what the athletes experienced in each of the three training runs.

Steven Nyman (Sundance, Utah) was 27th and Marco Sullivan (Squaw Valley) 30th. It was the final Olympic start for Sullivan, who will not race through 2018.

Trails lead everywhere except to destination



Pam Valentine, from left, Tom Ward and Sue Wood are having a hard time finding natural hot springs. Photos/Kathryn Reed

By Kathryn Reed

MARKLEEVILLE – Mystery hot springs between Markleeville and Gardnerville are still just that – a mystery.

I know they exist. I've seen pictures. I've heard stories. I've talked to someone who has been in the springs. I even had directions. But the four of us never found them.

I had been told about the springs from Linda who I volunteer with at Bread & Broth. These are part of the directions she

gave me: “… continue for a couple of blocks along the fence, but you will eventually have to go cross country up to the ridge where you will find a trail. Follow it and it will eventually go downhill toward the river, which you’ll be able to see from the top. Two nice hot pools at the bottom of the road right on the river.”



The terrain, even at 5,500 feet, is much different than the Lake Tahoe Basin.

We hit many ridges. We saw three women on one who asked us if we knew where the hot springs were. This encouraged us. We might be in the right area – or we were all lost.

We never saw the trio again despite eventually heading in their direction.

Others have said getting to the springs from the Leviathan Mine side would be an option. Maybe we’ll try another day. Or maybe we’ll just hike along the river and skip the whole ridgetop thing. Someone else suggested a rafting trip would be a way to find the springs.

What we did find on the last Sunday of January was new territory to explore. While the trails are now covered in snow, on this particular day we were able to wear hiking boots to tromp through the sagebrush and chaparral for what was about a 5.5-mile hike.

I don’t know how distinct the trails are for snowshoeing.

There are no trail markers or signs to know where you are or where you are going. That’s why it is important to pay attention to your surroundings so you’ll be able to find your vehicle at the end of the day.

Trails are single-track and may see more cow traffic than human beings based on the amount of dung in the dirt.



Snow covered mountains in the distance.

Sweeping views are visible from various high points. The contrast was stunning. At times the ruggedness of the Sierra penetrated the sky, while other times the parched Carson Valley unfolded below us.

It was an interesting trek to an area none of us had explored before. With its being lower in elevation than the Lake Tahoe Basin, the terrain was completely different. I could see how during summer this would be an unbearably hot place to hike because there would be little or no shade. Even two weeks ago Pam and I were in short-sleeves for part of the hike.

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Getting there:

From South Lake Tahoe go west on Highway 50. Turn left onto Highway 89 toward Hope Valley. At Picketts Junction, go left

onto Highway 88. Turn right onto Highway 89 toward Markleeville. Turn left onto Diamond Valley Road. Cross the river and park on the left. Cross the road and enter through the cattle gate. Start exploring. (There are cattle gates on both sides of the road, but we only explored in one direction.)

Fishing ban expanded in California

By Aaron Kinney, Bay Area News Group

SACRAMENTO — Taking an even more aggressive approach to protecting drought-stricken fish, state wildlife officials on Wednesday tightened already unprecedented restrictions on recreational fishing in Northern California.

The California Fish and Game Commission voted unanimously to extend shutdowns along the northern coast until the spring to safeguard threatened steelhead and endangered coho salmon. The commission also expanded the prohibition to include most of the Russian River in the North Bay and key spawning habitat in the American River east of Sacramento.

Charlton Bonham, director of the state Department of Fish and Wildlife, acknowledged the bans will be difficult for anglers and rural towns whose livelihoods depend on steelhead fishing during the winter. But, he added, the fishing community is overwhelmingly supportive of the state's intervention.

Read the whole story

U.S. takes gold in men’s slopestyle; Guldemond 15th

By USSA

ROSA KHOTUR, Russia – Sage Kotsenburg (Park City) scored a historic victory to open the 2014 Olympic Winter Games, winning the inaugural slopestyle snowboarding gold medal.

Kotsenburg, who failed to qualify in Thursdsay’s opening rounds, made his way into the finals Saturday morning then put down a remarkable first run which held for the win.

Norway’s Staale Sandbech earned silver, with Canadian favorite Mark McMorris taking bronze.

Team USA athletes Ryan Stassel (Anchorage) and Chas Guldemond (Reno) did not advance to the final and finished 14 and 15, respectively.

Kotsenburg showed the sportsmanship and camaraderie of snowboarding when he pulled his friends Sandbech and McMorris up onto the top of the podium with him during the medals presentation.

Kotsenburg’s gold medal winning run: Cab 270 to switch, half-cab on back 540 off flat down, half-cab layback slide off the cannon back 180 out, cab double cork 1260 holy crail, frontside 1080 off the toes rocket air and backside 1620 Japan.

Fresh Tracks snowshoe event at Camp Rich

The Tahoe Mountain Milers Running Club is hosting the Fresh Tracks 5K Snowshoe Walk and Race on Feb. 23 at 10am at Camp Richardson Resort.

The beneficiaries are the Eric Nageotte-Lowe Scholarship Fund for the Heavenly Freestyle Team and Girls On The Run-Sierras.

More info is online.

Cost is $20 if registered by Feb. 15 or $30 after that or at the event. Fee includes choice of swag, snowshoe rental, post-race refreshments, and continued day use of groomed Camp Richardson trails. Register online.

Polar Bear Swim in Carnelian Bay

The 25th annual Polar Bear Swim is March 1.

Each year hundreds of spectators line the pier and deck at Gar Woods Grill in Carnelian Bay to watch hardy souls brave the frigid waters of Lake Tahoe.

Following the swim, participants have access to hot tubs on the Gar Woods deck to warm their bodies. Complementary appetizers are provided to all following the race and cash prizes are awarded to the winning swimmers.

Festivities begin at 11:30am and the race starts at 2:30pm.

Swimmers may register online for $30 in advance or pay $35 the day of the event.

Snow and wind blowing in the basin

The National Weather Service in Reno has issued a winter storm warning above 5,000 feet for the 24-hour period starting at noon Friday.

A subtropical moisture plume will be pointed directly at Northern California through the weekend. Expect blowing snow to be a major factor for motorists.

“Snow will slowly change to rain as snow levels rise, with snow confined to areas above 7,000 feet by Saturday afternoon,” the Weather Service said.

Expect 6 to 14 inches above 5,000 feet and west of Highway 395 and 3 to 6 inches east of Highway 395.

Snow levels are expected to lower during the day Sunday and heavy snow may affect the major sierra passes around the Lake Tahoe Basin.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

High altitude ski mountaineer to share his story

Alpenglow Sports' fourth installment of 2013-14 Winter Film Series involves world-famous high altitude ski mountaineer and Marmot athlete Adrian Ballinger.

Ballinger's Feb. 20 show at Olympic Village Lodge is part of the Alpenglow Mountain Festival, a two-week celebration of human-powered winter sports.

Ballinger is well known for his professional guiding on Himalayan giants Mt. Everest, Ama Dablam, Lhotse, and Cho Oyu. Additionally, he is one of few Americans to possess a full international IFMGA guiding certificate and his professional resume has taken him on mountain adventures in South America, Europe, and beyond.

Ballinger will share his story "The Global Search for Powder" starting at 7pm.

For more info, call (530) 583.6917.

Classes focus on how to garden in Nevada

Cooperative Extension has teamed up with Washoe County Regional Parks and Open Space to offer Gardening in Nevada.

The free series of classes is from 6-8pm every Tuesdy through

March 25 at Bartley Ranch Regional Park, 6000 Bartley Ranch Road, Reno.

The classes are taught by Cooperative Extension horticulturists and experts, and master gardener volunteers.

Classes include:

Feb.11: Creating Backyard Habitats for Hummingbirds, Butterflies and Other Pollinators – Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Pamela Van Hoozer teaches gardeners how to attract beneficial insects to increase crop production and reduce pests.

Feb. 18: Selecting and Growing Garlic in Northern Nevada – Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Earstin Whitten explores the best garlic planting times, varieties and growing methods.

Feb. 25: Native Plants in the Garden – Cooperative Extension Horticulturist Specialist Heidi Kratsch presents the benefits of native plants and discusses their growing conditions, care and maintenance.

March 4: Selecting and Caring for Fruit Trees – Certified Arborist and Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Michael Janik, who grows more than 100 varieties of fruit trees in northern Nevada, delivers must-know fruit tree selection, planting and maintenance tips.

March 11: Indoor/Outdoor Plants – Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Suzanne Adams explores strategies for growing zone 6-9 plants in zone 5, increasing variety in the landscape.

March 18: Trees and Turf: Creating Healthy Landscapes – Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Program Coordinator Wendy Hanson Mazet discusses how to keep trees and turf healthy and strong in the urban environment, with proper

watering, fertilization and care.

March 25: Successful Vegetable Gardening – Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Randy Robison reveals the secrets to bountiful, award-winning harvests, including improving soil, rotating crops, using companion planting and gardening in raised beds.

For more information, call (775) 336.0265.

Moisture in the forecast through Sunday



Tree limbs fell in the last storm because it was wet and heavy snow. Photo/LTN

A winter weather advisory for the Lake Tahoe Basin is in effect from Feb. 6 from 4am to 10pm.

The National Weather Service in Reno is calling for 2 to 6 inches at lake level, with 5 to 10 inches above 7,000 feet.

This will be followed by another weather system on Friday and into the weekend. Friday's storm will bring strong winds, with

the brunt being Saturday near sunrise. A high wind watch has been issued for Gardnerville and Virginia City.

Rain and snow are in the forecast for the basin on Saturday and Sunday.

Highs will remain in the 30s and overnight lows in the 20s through the weekend.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report