3-day Nordic fest free on North Shore

Alpenglow Sports has teamed up with Tahoe Cross Country to present the first Lake Tahoe Nordic Festival Feb. 8-10.

All events are free, open to the public and take place at Tahoe Cross Country Ski Area in Tahoe City.

A full schedule of events is available online.

Uphill night climb to be rewarded with food, drink

The 2nd annual Nachtspektakel is Feb. 9 at Squaw Valley at 3pm sharp.

Tickets $50 in advance at Alpenglow Sports in Tahoe City or $60 on site. Ticket includes uphill ascent, three-course dinner, and two drinks.

A Nachtspektakel (knocked-shpeck-tockle) is a traditional European-style ski event that builds community through the sport of ski touring. A cultural norm in Europe, these are new ways to combine skiing, beer and food.

Ski tourers of all abilities are invited to ascend to Squaw Valley’s High Camp, followed by food and drink.

Alpenglow will be offering free rentals the day of the event. Rentals must be picked up by 1pm, and that can be returned at

the end of the evening at the event or the following day to the store.

Come appropriately dressed with complete uphill gear, skis, skins, boots, poles and headlamp. Bring warm clothes, and perhaps a change of clothes for drinks/dinner. Mardi Gras accessories are encouraged. Beacons, shovels, and probes are not required but recommended.

Meet at the tram for sign-ins at 2:30pm. Event starts at 3pm.

For questions, call Alpenglow at (530) 583.6917.

Anderson takes gold at X Games in snowboard slopestyle

By ESPN

Riding in her ninth X Games, Jamie Anderson of South Lake Tahoe scored her second straight Jeep Snowboard Slopestyle Women's gold medal Saturday at X Games Aspen 2013 with a commanding lead from the outset.

"I just wanted to put down a solid run and do my best," she said about her first of three runs, which earned a score of 93 points – enough to hold off the rest of the pack for the duration of the contest," Anderson said. "I'm just so thankful to be here. I'm really inspired to learn player.

Squaw’s men skiers miss downhill podium

By USSA

KITZBUEHEL, Austria -– Dominik Paris became the first Italian since the great Kristian Ghedina to win the famed Hahnenkamm downhill for his second Audi FIS Alpine World Cup downhill win this season.

Travis Ganong (Squaw Valley) posted the top U.S. Ski Team finish with 19th as both Steven Nyman (Sundance, Utah) and Ted Ligety (Park City) missed a gate on the treacherous side hill just above the finish pitch.

Canadian Erik Guay finished second ahead of Hannes Reichelt of Austria.

Marco Sullivan (Squaw Valley) was 24th and Andrew Weibrecht (Lake Placid, N.Y.) 34th.

Vonn on top of GS podium, Mancuso 8th

By USSA

MARIBOR, Slovenia – Lindsey Vonn (Vail) powerfully mastered

the Golden Fox in Maribor for a stunning giant slalom victory Jan. 26 to capture the 59th Audi FIS Alpine World Cup win of her career.

Third after the opening run, Vonn accelerated immediately after breaking the start wand, nearly went on her hip mid run and picked up speed all the way to the finish to win the second run, regulating hometown hero Tina Maze to second. The four-time World Cup overall champion is now three short of Austrian great Annemarie Moser-Proell's women's victory record of 62.

It was Vonn's first giant slalom win since March 9, when she clinched her fourth overall title with victory in Are, Sweden.

Hometown favorite Tina Maze was second to continue leading the overall and giant slalom standings.

Julia Mancuso (Squaw Valley) finished eighth and Mikaela Shiffrin (Eagle-Vail) 13th for her fourth giant slalom top 15 this season.

Feds: Disabled students must be allowed to play sports

By Phillip Elliott, AP

WASHINGTON — Students with disabilities must be given a fair shot to play on a traditional sports team or have their own leagues, the Education Department says.

Disabled students who want to play for their school could join traditional teams if officials can make "reasonable modifications" to accommodate them. If those adjustments would

fundamentally alter a sport or give the student an advantage, the department is directing the school to create parallel athletic programs that have comparable standing to traditional programs.

“Sports can provide invaluable lessons in discipline, selflessness, passion and courage, and this guidance will help schools ensure that students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to benefit from the life lessons they can learn on the playing field or on the court,” Education Secretary Arne Duncan said in a statement announcing the new guidance Friday.

The groundbreaking order is reminiscent of the Title IX expansion of athletic opportunities for girls and women four decades ago and could bring sweeping changes to school budgets and locker rooms for years to come.

Activists cheered the changes.

“This is a landmark moment for students with disabilities. This will do for students with disabilities what Title IX did for women,” said Terri Lakowski, who for a decade led a coalition pushing for the changes. “This is a huge victory.”

It’s not clear whether the new guidelines will spark a sudden uptick in sports participation. There was a big increase in female participation in sports after Title IX guidance instructed schools to treat female athletics on par with male teams. That led many schools to cut some men’s teams, arguing that it was necessary to be able to pay for women’s teams.

Education Department officials emphasized they did not intend to change sports traditions dramatically or guarantee students with disabilities a spot on competitive teams. Instead, they insisted schools may not exclude students based on their disabilities if they can keep up with their classmates.

Federal laws, including the 1973 Rehabilitation Act and the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act, require states to

provide a free public education to all students and prohibit schools that receive federal money from discriminating against students with disabilities. Going further, the new directive from the Education Department's civil rights division explicitly tells schools and colleges that access to interscholastic, intramural and intercollegiate athletics is a right.

The department suggests minor accommodations to incorporate students with disabilities onto sports teams. For instance, track and field officials could use a visual cue for a deaf runner to begin a race.

Some states already offer such programs. Maryland, for instance, passed a law in 2008 that required schools to create equal opportunities for students with disabilities to participate in physical education programs and play on traditional athletic teams. And Minnesota awards state titles for disabled student athletes in six sports.

Increasingly, those with disabilities are finding spots on their schools' teams.

"I heard about some of the other people who joined their track teams in other states. I wanted to try to do that," said Casey Followay, 15, of Wooster, Ohio, who competes on his high school track team in a racing wheelchair.

Current rules require Followay to race on his own, without competitors running alongside him. He said he hopes the Education Department guidance will change that and he can compete against runners.

"It's going to give me the chance to compete against kids at my level," he said.

Some cautioned that progress would come in fits and starts initially.

“Is it easy? No,” said Brad Hedrick, director of disability services at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and himself a hall-of-famer in the National Wheelchair Basketball Association. “In most places, you’re beginning from an inertial moment. But it is feasible and possible that a meaningful and viable programming can be created.”

Bowman lands double 900s to win gold at X Games

By USSA

ASPEN – U.S. Freeskiing’s Maddie Bowman (South Lake Tahoe) put together back-to-back 900s to take her first X Games gold in only her second appearance.

It was the second straight win for Bowman who topped the field in the Visa U.S. Freeskiing Grand Prix in Copper Mountain two weeks earlier.

Bowman popped a huge 91.33 score on her first run to hold on for nearly a five point win.

Canada’s Roz Groenewoud and Megan Gunning were silver and bronze.

U.S. Freeskiing Rookie Team skier Annalisa Drew (Andover, Mass.) wowed the crowd throwing a never before seen in competition 1260 on each of three runs to finish sixth in her X Games debut.

Bowman kicked it off with a gold medal performance on her first run. Her first hit consisted of a big 900 to a 540, followed by a smooth tail grab to a cork 900 to 720 to a

switch 540.

Wise takes gold at X Games in freeskiing

By USSA

ASPEN – U.S. Freeskiing's David Wise (Reno) soared to a repeat X Games gold leading a U.S. podium sweep.

"This has been a great night. I was hoping for this, but I wasn't expecting it. I was so happy to get the dubs dialed and its been a goal of mine for a long time. I went out there and laid it down," Wise said.

Hometown hero Torin Yater-Wallace (Aspen) took silver in his first event back from injury, while veteran Simon Dumont (Bethel, Maine) won bronze.

Wise put down an epic performance on both runs (he opted out of a third), throwing back to back double cork 1260s to take the gold 95.66 to 93.00 over Yater-Wallace.

Wise run was: right side 720 leading mute-grab, switch left side double cork 1080 Japan grab, right side double cork 1260 mute grab, ally-oop flat 540 true tail grab.

Halfpipe skiing will make its Olympic debut next season in Sochi, with Olympic test events there next month.

Funds from Measure R allocated for South Shore bicycle trail, ball field improvement

By Joann Eisenbrandt

The South Lake Tahoe Recreation Joint Powers Authority met Jan. 25 in the City Council chambers to decide how to allocate the estimated $450,000 in previously unspent Measure R money.

Shay Navarro, chairperson of the Bicycle Advisory Committee, presented her committee's funding requests. That committee in conjunction with the city, California Tahoe Conservancy, El Dorado County and Lake Tahoe Bicycle Coalition identified trail building and maintenance needs within the JPA's jurisdiction, to, as Navarro put it, "work alongside the city's efforts to make this a world class, year-round bicycle destination."

The committee requested the following allocations of Measure R funds:

• $100,000 to South Lake Tahoe to match the grant of $475,452 received from Caltrans through the Bicycle Transportation Authority, which is contingent upon the release of these JPA funds. Funds would be spent in the five bicycle trail rehabilitation zones as outlined in a detailed memo to the JPA from Jim Marino and John Upton.

• $88,000 for TREX (or similar) decking for the bicycle trail bridges over the Truckee River and Trout Creek. (In July, $30,000 was allocated for this, but the improvements were not made.) Additional research concluded that an additional $58,000 would be needed.

• Up to $45,000 for a bridge to raise the portion of trail behind McDonald's that seasonally floods.

• An endorsement by the JPA of the Bicycle Advisory Committee letter to South Lake Tahoe and El Dorado County requesting creation of a collaborative agreement for a regularly-scheduled bicycle trail maintenance program (striping, sweeping and snow removal) among the city, El Dorado County, Caltrans and the Lake Tahoe Bicycle Coalition. This does not include any funding request.



The South Shore can expect more bike trail improvements like this one at Sawmill and Highway 50. Photo/LTN file

Following Navarro's presentation, bike committee member Chuck Nelson expressed concerns that the BAC's recommendations on funding priorities as well as specifics on the creation of a collaborative bike trail maintenance program may not be carried out as envisioned.

“The Bicycle Advisory Committee has a very important role under Measure R in providing recommendations to the JPA,” he insisted. “We want to make sure it’s done right.”

He asked that the motion approving the allocation of the $100,000 to the city require acceptance of the BAC’s recommendations.

El Dorado County Supervisor Norma Santiago responded that she supported the allocation of the $100,000 but could not support imposing such requirements on a jurisdiction, adding that everything she’d heard from the BAC indicated there had been and would continue to be an openness on the city’s part and that if any recommendations needed changing, the BAC would be involved in that process.

City Councilwoman JoAnn Conner, the South Lake Tahoe’s JPA representative, told Nelson, “You sound accusatory. It’s unfair to categorize the city as uncooperative. There’s nobody on the City Council who doesn’t believe in this … I suggest you work from a position of trust with the city. We’re committed to getting this process done.”

After additional discussion, the JPA unanimously approved all four of the Bicycle Advisory Committee’s requests.

Fields Advisory Committee member Ken Riegel then presented a PowerPoint outlining his committee’s requests for Measure R funding. They were:

• $134,000 to the Lake Tahoe Unified School District to rehabilitate the field at Sierra House Elementary School, which he described as “a dangerous, uneven field.”

• $90,000 to LTUSD for varsity softball field No. 2 at South Tahoe High School. He noted the school district has already done substantial work there and these funds would be used to complete that work.

• $20,000 to LTUSD for planning only at this time for the construction of an added multi-used softball field at the Al Tahoe fields site. Additional funding for the projects themselves would come and be used in 2014 and 2015. These fields, he noted, are the most highly used with over 300,000 children using them annually for softball, baseball and soccer. Because so many families are involved, he indicated that, “many volunteers and professionals are also available to rally on completing these projects.”

• Designate future JPA funds in the following amounts for additional fields projects: $134,000 for constructing an added field at Al Tahoe; $29,150 for relocation of the T-Ball field at Al Tahoe; and $92,600 for upgrading the existing fields at Al Tahoe.

Riegel also listed additional “unfunded projects” identified by the FAC at the magnet school in Meyers, Tahoe Valley Elementary, Bijou Community School and South Tahoe Middle School. The magnet school was identified as their top priority.

FAC member Marilyn Breisacher spoke to the importance of the “gender-neutral” improvements that have been made to fields in the community, specifically referencing the amenities to the fields at South Tahoe High School for girls. Her daughter, she explained, had to play in the past on a field with “no restrooms, concession stand or adequate seating,” adding that the improvements won’t just help local players but will also help bring in more girls softball tournaments.

The JPA approved all four FAC requests as presented. The next Recreation JPA meeting will be in July. The Bicycle and Field Advisory Committees will be meeting later this quarter and will bring updates to the July JPA meeting.

The three-member JPA consists of Santiago, Conner, and Tahoe

Paradise Park Improvement District Board Member Judy Clot. The latter two are new to the board, with Friday being each of their first meeting.

Measure R was passed in November 2011 with the intention of changing and expanding the locations and services that could be funded by the Community Facilities District originally established by Measure S when it passed in September 2000. Measure S provided for a $5.8 million bond to construct an ice rink, four ball fields adjacent to Lake Tahoe Community College, improving Tahoe Paradise Park and opening it to the public, and maintaining 25 miles of new bike trails. Measure S also provided for yearly maintenance funding for the new athletic fields by LTCC, Tahoe Paradise Park and the newly constructed bicycle trails. Under Measure S, each single-family home in the district is assessed $18/year. Measure S/R will sunset in 2030.

In reality, only about eight to 10 miles of bike trails were built. The unused remainder of the annual Measure S allocation of $125,000 continued accumulating, but was unspendable. Measure R unlocked those funds by adding to the authorized improvements and services funded by Measure S to include the renovation and maintenance of Class 1 bicycle trails existing prior to Sep. 19, 2000, and the renovation of youth ball fields within the Community Facilities District. It created a Bicycle Advisory Committee and a Fields Advisory Committee to make recommendations to the JPA as to costs and priorities of future improvements and maintenance for sports fields as well as bicycle paths in the district.

TRPA tweaks summer boating program

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency's Governing Board approved an annual update to the Aquatic Invasive Species Watercraft Inspection Program on Wednesday.

The approval keeps nearly all boater fees the same and is designed to improve efficiency of service at watercraft inspection stations around the Lake Tahoe Basin in an effort to keep the $1.4 million inspection program in the black.

The jointly-managed inspection program annually certifies more than 15,000 motorized watercraft as being free of invasive species before launching into Lake Tahoe to help prevent the introduction of non-native species that could devastate Lake Tahoe's fragile ecosystem and native fisheries and impact boats and recreation areas.

The updates maintain hours of operation during the busiest boat inspection times at the five roadside inspection stations around the Tahoe region. Inspection stations in Meyers, at Spooner Summit and Alpine Meadows will begin closing at 5:30pm Sunday-Wednesday this summer, but close at 8pm Thursday-Saturday.

Homewood and Northstar inspection stations will be open Thursday through Sunday and will operate from 8am-5:30pm

For additional information, call Jeff Cowen at (775) 589l5278 or email jcowen@trpa.org.