Reconnecting with what makes Tahoe fun

With all the craziness in the world, we agree with Anthony Cupaiuolo of First Track Productions in South Lake Tahoe that a fun video is in order.

Considering he has cousins in a neighboring school in Connecticut and didn't know for hours if his family was OK, he has room to speak. And his cousin's husband was one of the first responders to the school shooting on Dec. 14.

He offers this video to bring some smiles to faces when the world makes it so hard to smile:

– Lake Tahoe News staff

Save money by registering now for 2013 Lake Tahoe Marathon

The Lake Tahoe Marathon on Dec. 15 opened registration for the Sept. 27-29 events.

Discounted (25 percent) early bird registrations will be taken until 8am Dec. 18.

A 20 percent discount continues through the end of December.

More info is online.

White overcomes conditions to win Dew Tour halfpipe

By USSA

BRECKENRIDGE, Colo. -– Despite battling snowy conditions and a slow halfpipe Shaun White, who trains at Northstar, and Kaitlyn Farrington (Bellevue, Idaho) came out on top at Dew Tour halfpipe finals.

“After coming off a knee injury this summer I am glad to be on top. I feel great and I am pumped for the season. This is the road to Sochi,” White said.

Farrington debuted back-to-back 900s for the first time in her competition run. White sported an enormous double McTwist 1200 in his first run that scored a 95.25.

Louie Vito (Sandy, Utah), the defending Dew Tour champion, had an impressive first run that scored a 90 and went for a double 1200 in his second, but did not land on his feet.

U.S. Snowboarding’s Maddy Schaffrick (Steamboat Springs, Colo.) after battling two consecutive injuries soared to third with a huge front-side 720.

Noticeably absent from the podium was Kelly Clark (West Dover, Vt.) and Elena Hight (South Lake Tahoe) who struggled with speed in both their runs.

Helmets don’t have to be standard off-the-rack plastic

By Berne Broudy, Outside

In the 1990s, Dan Coyle started making wooden helmets for himself and his buddies for whitewater kayaking, as well as wooden eyeglass frames and paddles. It was a hobby, a use for Coyle’s chainsaw and grinder.

Coyle noticed that, structurally, wood is similar to rigid, closed-cell foam. That means it can, with impact, deform and absorb shock like EPS in a traditional bicycle helmet. In fact, Coyle discovered, almost any wood is capable of absorbing more energy than polycarbonate and the ABS plastics typically used in bike, skate, motorcycle, and ski helmets, while also being more durable.

A wooden shell provides protection over a greater spectrum of impact energies, according to Coyle’s tests. Add a cork liner and the comfort level compares to other helmets currently on the market.

Now, Coyle has turned his hobby into a business. Using everything from Doug Fir to black walnut, Coyle custom builds one-of-a-kind sports helmets. The hardwoods and most of the softwoods he uses are salvaged.

And all of the sawdust, chips, and splinter byproducts of his work are returned to the ground to decay and re-enter the natural cycle.

Each finished product is unique.

With business growing, Coyle did his due diligence and tested his wood/cork technology at an accredited impact lab. But because they are custom made, Coyle's helmets are not certifiable.

Helmets start at $375.

Check out his website.

White launches quest for 2014 pipe, slopestyle gold at Dew Tour

By Jason Blevins, Denver Post

BRECKENRIDGE – Shaun White has been a pro snowboarder for half his life, becoming the most recognized action sports athlete of all time through 13 years of driven competition.

At 26, the lines on his face are a tad deeper, his perspective more aged – and his posse now includes a French bulldog named Steve. Yet the drive to win that defines his board riding hasn't faded an iota.

As he prepares for gold in Sochi's 2014 Olympic halfpipe and slopestyle contests – starting this weekend at the Dew Tour in Breckenridge – he's scheming bigger tricks, even bigger than the back-to-back double-cork 1260s that earned him a perfect score in the X Games halfpipe in Aspen last winter or his

famous double McTwist 1260s.

“I see tons of possibilities. There’s a lot of things that are happening in slopestyle that can be taken over to the halfpipe,” he said Friday morning, with his red mane in a tight bun, and looking dapper in a tie and signature tight trousers during a series of interviews at Breckenridge. “What else can be done? It’s my job to take it a little further. I’ve already set things in motion to try to one-up everything I’ve done so far.”

With a reserved run in the Thursday semifinals, White qualified second for Saturday’s halfpipe finals behind Scotty Lago. While White says he won’t be throwing his craziest tricks Saturday – the first competition of the season – his bag of tricks has never been deeper.

“I don’t really know where the halfpipe tricks are going,” White said. “A lot of the judging is off amplitude, so I’m just trying to go as big as I can with certain tricks and variations.”

Despite owning more medals from slopestyle than halfpipe, White took off the creative slopestyle training for two seasons in 2009 and 2010 as he focused on halfpipe in preparation for that year’s Winter Games. That was because slopestyle was not a medal sport in Vancouver.

His comeback in slopestyle was slow. He failed to qualify in the 2011 Winter X Games slopestyle contest in Aspen and dropped out of the 2012 Aspen slopestyle competition after qualifying last. But then in March, he won slopestyle gold at the Winter X Games in Tignes, France, with three double corks, including back-to-back double-cork 1260s.

Still, after knee surgery this spring and taking off from skateboard competition this summer, White said he is easing into the season.

He won’t compete in Sunday’s slopestyle contest in Breckenridge, but he will in every other slopestyle contest this season.

“That’s where I’ve got to make my biggest stand: slopestyle,” he said.

White said he spent the spring and summer “doing something I don’t normally do: living my life.” He hung out at his new beach house in Encinitas, and went to New York City for two months, playing music with pals and searching for inspiration.

“You can definitely tell I get influenced by where I’m at,” said the longtime clothing designer with a collection he developed with sponsor Target. “I like being influenced by different places, different things. You can tell it shows in the way I ride, what I wear on the mountain and what I’m wearing off the hill.”

In September, White made less glowing headlines when he was arrested after a fracas at a Nashville hotel. Despite his handlers asking Dew Tour media to avoid asking about the incident, White said, “Let’s focus on it.”

According to the police report, “White appeared to be extremely intoxicated and smelled strongly of alcohol.” He was cited for public intoxication and vandalism. He refuted reports that he was getting some sort of treatment for alcohol abuse.

“There was an assessment that was done, and everyone took that that I’m getting treatment for all these things,” White said. “And it’s more like, ‘Hey you had a mistake. Did you learn from it? OK. Let’s move on.’ And I moved on. I learned my lesson.”

Missing the skateboard season means a slower entry to snowboarding for White. He has spent only five days on snow this winter. Last year, it was the skateboard that opened

doors to the new tricks that contributed to last winter's 100-point score in Aspen.

"The technical aspect of skateboarding helps snowboarding with balance and focus and being precise," he said. "I learned double corks on jumps onto a foam pit on a skateboard. That was a direct impact."

Today, White spends his off-mountain time developing his creative style in clothing, videos with GoPro, snowboarding camps at Vail Resorts' Northstar ski area and even two flavors of gum with Stride.

He parted ways last year with Red Bull after a four-year partnership that included the energy drink giant sculpting a private superpipe at Colorado's remote Silverton Mountain ski area.

Almost 18 months later, he has yet to enlist a new beverage sponsor, revealing his very particular and intensive approach to sponsorship. His individual brand is likely the biggest in action sports, and he works to keep it vibrant.

"The majority of my process is not based on money. Otherwise, I'd be with Red Bull. We just didn't see eye-to-eye on certain things. They do things a certain way, and it just wasn't lining up with where I was heading. That's why I haven't jumped on a new one yet," he said. "It's quality over quantity for me. I just want to make sure I can give each partnership and things that I do the right amount of attention. The list that gets said no to is massive compared to the list we agree to."

Men from Squaw miss downhill podium in Italy

By USSA

VAL GARDENA, Italy – Do you believe in Steven? The Utah downhiller put a mark on his comeback returning to the site of his 2006 Audi FIS Alpine World Cup win to do it again.

Steven Nyman (Sundance, Utah) came out of the 37th start position to steal a victory on the foggy, snowy Saslong Classic after hours of delays on Saturday. It was his second career win and fourth podium.

Travis Ganong (Squaw Valley) had a career best 10th.

Nyman's last podium came in 2007 at Beaver Creek. Nyman missed all of the 2012 season with a torn left Achilles.

Marco Sullivan (Squaw Valley), who was third in the season opening downhill, finished 18th.

Anderson nails slopestyle run to win Dew Tour in Breckenridge

By USSA

BRECKENRIDGE, Colo. – Jamie Anderson of South Lake Tahoe started her season with an impressive run that featured some

of the most versatile riding snowboarding fans have seen, winning the women's Dew Tour slopestyle finals in Breckenridge on Friday.

Nailing her final run with spins in all four directions and a massive 540 on the final jump that she floated to the bottom, Anderson scored a remarkable score of 96 out of a possible 100. It was an improvement over Anderson's finish at last season's Breckenridge Dew Tour where she came in fifth.

Next up for Anderson is the Sprint U.S. Grand Prix and FIS World Cup at Copper Mountain Jan. 9-13.

Canada's Spencer O'Brien placed second with Enni Rukajarvi from Finland taking third.

"I don't even have words! I really lifted my last jump and I knew that I needed my frontside 7 in my run, but I was having a hard time with it during training." Anderson said. "I knew it was important to spin four ways and I am so thankful to be here. This is such a nice personal redemption for me and this is what I wanted to do. The course was really fun too."

Bowman takes second in halfpipe on Dew Tour

By USSA

BRECKENRIDGE, Colo. -– Brita Sigourney's (Carmel) amplitude and technical tricks won the judges over at women's halfpipe finals at the Dew Tour on Friday.

Teammate Maddie Bowman (South Lake Tahoe) whose run featured left and right 900s with strong grabs, landed her in second.

“I really want to do well at this event to start my season off right. It was great to be able to try my new 900 and nail it,” Bowman said.

It was Sigourney’s first competition back after she suffered a knee injury in late February.

Canada’s Rosalind Groenewoud or “Roz G” took third.

Men’s halfpipe finals saw David Wise (Reno) to fifth with Canada’s Justin Dorey taking the win.

Ganong top U.S. finisher in super G

By USSA

VAL GARDENA, Italy– Travis Ganong of Squaw Valley led a back of the pack charge by the U.S. Ski Team in the Val Gardena super G, starting 58th and finishing 24th to lead five U.S. Ski Team athletes into the points.

Ted Ligety was 25th to retain second in the Audi FIS Alpine World Cup overall standings behind race winner Aksel Lund Svindal of Norway.

Ganong was followed in 59th start by Steven Nyman (Sundance, Utah), who finished 29th. Tommy Biesemeyer (Keene, N.Y.) was 27th and Andrew Weibrecht (Lake Placid, N.Y.) 30th.

“I’ve had really great speed in training. Today I was just approaching it like another training day. I was just trying to go for it as hard as I can and then react to any mistakes,” Ganong said.

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4 U.S. women in top 10 in downhill in France

By USSA

VAL d’ISERE, FRANCE – Leanne Smith parlayed an early start number into a career first Audi FIS Alpine World Cup podium, finishing second in the Val d’Isere downhill behind Swiss winner Lara Gut on Dec. 14.

Smith, who started third, led four Americans into the top 10 on a shortened course after high winds forced a move of the start.

Lindsey Vonn crashed hard into the B-netting, but skied away with no major injuries. Vonn remained third in the Audi FIS Alpine World Cup overall and still leads in downhill standings with Cook second.

Julia Mancuso (Squaw Valley) was seventh, Alice McKennis (Glenwood Springs, Colo.) eighth and Stacey Cook (Mammoth Mountain) 10th.