

N. Nev. schools willing to end true state playoffs

By Ray Brewer, Las Vegas Sun

We learned at a young age the importance of beating a high school from Reno in the state tournament. If you played football, the goal was to win the zone championship game at the Silver Bowl, then to carry the flag for Southern Nevada when taking on a team from the north for a state title.

Times have surely changed over the past 20 years. The Silver Bowl is Sam Boyd Stadium, after all.

Reno-area high school athletic officials, so frustrated with a decade of taking second place to Bishop Gorman in football and basketball, are well on their way to making it to where the days of a north-south state championship are over in the large-school classification for all sports.

The Nevada Interscholastic Activities Association's Board of Control in January will be asked to approve a new 5A classification for high-enrollment, perennially competitive schools such as Gorman, Coronado and Palo Verde.

[Read the whole story](#)

Sierra to open with 11 runs on Saturday

Sierra-at-Tahoe will open for the 2017-18 winter season on Dec. 2.

The resort will offer limited terrain, accessed by two lifts and two surface lifts. Early season conditions are present throughout the mountain and guests are asked to obey all signs and closures.

Sierra-at-Tahoe will spin Grandview Express and Easy Rider Express, giving guests access to eleven trails and two terrain parks. Limited lessons will be available.

Sierra Pub, Mama's Kitchen and Java Junction will be open.

Day tickets will be \$71.

Heavenly plans to widen trails, reduce hazards



Heavenly Mountain Resort wants to remove obstacles and put some snowmaking underground. Photo/LTN file

By Kathryn Reed

Heavenly Mountain Resort wants to cut down trees, move boulders and relocate snowmaking equipment all in the name of creating a better experience for skiers and snowboarders.

For this next phase of the master plan, the Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit is taking comments on the draft environmental assessment until Dec. 22.

The work is slated for next year. A price tag for the construction has not been disclosed.

Heavenly has a number of locations where it's rather dangerous because so many people are in a narrow area. That's why the resort wants to do this work, the goal being to give skiers more room to spread out.

The plan is to remove congestion on 49er, Orion, Big Dipper, Cascade, Sam's Dream, Ridge Way, Ridge Run, Olympic Downhill, \$100 Saddle, Powderbowl, Comet and Bonanza. These 12 trails encompass 25.3 acres.

Table 1. Ski Trail Widening Locations	
Run	Area (acres)
49er (IW-1)	0.3
Sam's Dream (IW-2)	1.2
Cascade (IW-3)	0.3
Ridge Run (IW-4)	2.9
Upper Powderbowl (IW-5)	1.0
Ridge Way (IW-6)	0.3
Lower \$100 Saddle (IW-7)	0.5
Comet (OW-1)	3.3
Orion's (OW-2)	10.9
Big Dipper (OW-3)	1.2
Lower Olympic Downhill (OW-4)	3.2
Bonanza	0.2
<i>Total</i>	25.3

Note: Comet, Orion's, Big Dipper, Lower Olympic Downhill and Bonanza area located outside the Lake Tahoe Basin Boundary.

Source: *USFS*

According to the draft EA, "Lower Orion's and Lower Olympic Downhill would require grading to match the widened area to the grade of the existing ski trail. Widening proposed for Ridge Run would expand the skiable boundary, but would be located within the existing special use permit boundary."

When this project was out for scoping in the spring nine comments were submitted to the Forest Service.

"Some of the issues received, such as limiting ticket sales to manage congestion and user experience, and issues around charging fees for uphill skiing access, were deemed to be outside the scope of the proposed action," according to the Forest Service.

The USFS is advocating for tree removal and the other work desired by Heavenly.

"There are identified locations on sections of key ski trails that, as a result of bordering forested areas, are not sufficiently wide enough to accommodate existing use levels and the desired flow of skiers and snowboarders during peak daily and seasonal periods," the EA states.

Most of the resort operates on USFS land under a 40-year special use agreement that expires in 2042.

"Tree removal would be conducted over snow and skidded behind a snowcat over compacted snow. The trees would then be chipped and reused as mulch and soil amendment. Exposed boulders posing a safety hazard would be removed during the summer with excavators and placed in existing depressions along the edges of the widened trails," the environmental document says.

Table 2. Run Hazard Reduction Locations		
Run	Proposed Area (acres)	Mitigated Area (acres)
Upper California Trail (IH-1)	7.3	3.35
Cascade (IH-2)	3.5	3.49
Sam's Dream (IH-3)	2	2
49er (IH-4)	2.4	2.4
Advanced Round-a-bout (IH-5)	3.3	3.3
Little Dipper (OH-1)	4.9	4.9
Upper Stagecoach (OH-2)	8.1	8.1
Meteor (OH-3)	3.3	3.3
*Ridge Run (IW-4)	2.9	2.89
*Upper Powderbowl (IW-5)	1.0	1.0
*Lower Olympic Downhill "S Curves" (OW-4)	3.2	3.2
<i>Total</i>	<i>41.9</i>	<i>37.93</i>

Note: Little Dipper, Upper Stagecoach and Meteor area located outside the Lake Tahoe Basin Boundary.

*Minor run hazard reduction activities (e.g., boulder removal or capping) would also occur on Ridge Run, Powderbowl, and Olympic downhill within the proposed trail widening areas.

Source: *USFS*

Getting rid of obstacles would occur on: Little Dipper, Meteor, Cascade, Sam's Dream, California Trail, Stagecoach, Advanced Roundabout, Ridge Run, Powderbowl and Olympic Downhill.

A result of getting rid of the boulders and downed trees would mean the depth of snow needed to ski that run would be dramatically reduced. This then reduces the amount of snowmaking needed and could open terrain sooner.

The resort is projecting to save 10.9 million gallons of water and 365,000 kilowatts of electricity by lessening the need for snowmaking on these select trails.

About 5,800 feet of snowmaking equipment would be moved to accommodate the widening and obstacle removal projects. Plus, much of it will be put underground.

The draft EA is available **online**.

USFS seeks comments on Incline land

Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit is seeking comments on the Incline management plan project.

The purpose of the project is to incorporate the land acquired in 2011 into the LTBMU Forest Plan and assign it to the appropriate management area. The purpose of this planning effort is also to plan project-specific activities to bring the land up to USFS standards for stream and habitat management, recreation management, and road and trails standards.

According to the Forest Service, the preliminary need to amend and change the Forest Plan is to designate approximately 400 acres of the project area (west of Third Creek) as the backcountry management area to protect water quality, improve habitat, and provide dispersed recreation opportunities. The remainder of the site would remain designated as general conservation (general forest).

No change to the management area description in the Forest Plan is proposed, only the geographic distribution of the land designated as backcountry management area within the project area.

The proposed action and maps, as well as any project updates, are posted **online**.

This project is in the scoping stage of National Environmental Policy Act analysis. Send comments to Ashley Sibr, Re: Incline Management Plan Project, Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit, 35 College Drive, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150. Comments are due

Jan. 5.

Sports leagues hedging bets on nationwide legal gambling

By Ben Nuckols, AP

WASHINGTON — In court, all four major U.S. sports leagues are fighting New Jersey's challenge to the federal ban on sports gambling, which the Supreme Court will hear next month.

Outside of court, leaders of three of the four leagues have made public comments that suggest they wouldn't mind losing the case. Only the NFL has been steadfast in its opposition to gambling, a stance that critics see as hypocritical, especially as the Raiders plan a move to a billion-dollar stadium just off the Las Vegas Strip.

As the Supreme Court prepares to hear a case that could lead to the federal ban on sports betting being struck down, the leagues are hedging their bets — preparing for a future of expanded gambling and hoping to have a say in how legalization takes effect.

Read the whole story

Birds nesting earlier to try to survive global warming



Steller Jays find all sorts of places to build a nest. Photo/LTWC

By Kurtis Alexander, San Francisco Chronicle

The early bird not only gets the worm, but may stand a better chance of riding out global warming.

A study finds that birds in California are breeding up to 12 days earlier than they did a century ago, an apparent effort to maintain their optimal nesting temperatures as the planet warms.

Like many plants and animals, birds have been known to relocate to cooler places to compensate for rising temperatures, moving north or to higher elevations. But the research published this month in the journal *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* highlights the extent to which birds are going to adapt in other ways to a changing world.

Read the whole story

Squaw Valley creating on-mountain dining experience to match its legendary terrain



Dining with a view is what the Terrace at the top of the Squaw's tram is all about. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

By Kathryn Reed

OLYMPIC VALLEY – November skiing is always something to be thankful for in the Sierra because Mother Nature seems to be so fickle in the fall.

Out of the last five years, this is the most terrain Squaw

Valley has had open this time of year. It's obvious there has been a ton of natural snow coming down based on what is in the trees and the rocky chutes. Snowmaking guns are keeping the more popular routes open so they don't get skied off in between storms, and until there is a solid base.



All the runs off Shirley Lake are open. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

Over the weekend it was a bit like spring skiing with the conditions being slick in the morning and softening up as the day progressed.

While the mountain isn't open top-to-bottom just yet, there is a mix of terrain available to satisfy all ability levels. Eleven lifts give access to 39 trails and 16 groomed runs. Tracks could be seen where skiers went off-piste. A small terrain park is open, too.



Squaw Valley's rugged terrain is complemented by picturesque views of Lake Tahoe. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

High Camp, at the top of the tram, is going through a \$1.8 million renovation that is expected to be finished by Christmas week. The last time any of the facilities here were updated was in 1991 – and it was showing in wear and dated offerings.

The Marketplace is open. This is where people can get grab-and-go food items – some healthy, some not as much. Courtney, the pastry chef, makes sweets fresh on a daily basis. Organic items are available, as well as edibles for vegetarians and those with wheat allergies. Gloves and goggles – items people may have left in the car or condo – may be purchased there as well.

This area used to be a larger retail area.



The Marketplace at High Camp offers prepackaged food, espresso and some retail.
Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

One level below is a space that had been underutilized, with few people knowing there was retail there. On Saturday it was packed with people eating food they had bought upstairs or had brought from home. Traditional tables are mixed in with more relaxing sofas. There's also a small alcove for little kids to play in.

Behind this area is the Terrace Buffet and Bar with its

expansive views down to the village and out to Lake Tahoe. The multitude of windows beckons photo opportunities. The 180-degree seating – which is still in pieces – is the most scenic dining spot on the mountain.



Comfortable seating has been added as a place to chill or eat without being in a restaurant. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

Gone are the half booths. In their place will be round tables near the windows, with seating for four and two at rectangular tables. The old green carpet is gone. The flooring is now shades of brown.

The wood has been refinished to the point it looks new. A couple of the old brass railings have been made to look antique-ish.



Lance Crafts is in charge of the entire High Camp lodge. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

The bar is the focal point. With it dropping down, the bartenders and their bottles don't impede the view. Lance Crafts, manager of High Camp, said the smoked old fashioned is something to experience.

The portable buffet stations will offer a variety of food choices – some hot, some cold.

Chef Andrew Gregory, who is in his second year at Squaw, oversees the various kitchens. He said the renovation of the entire High Camp operation is energizing him as well as his team.



Chef Andrew Gregory wants to do more than provide skiers and snowboarders with delicious food. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

“We are going to elevate the food and the service,” Gregory told *Lake Tahoe News*.

While burgers remain one of the most popular entrees, don’t expect only traditional ski resort grub. Gregory was raving about a pappardelle pasta dish as well as the Sierra cassoulet and the authentic po’ boy sandwich.



The granite bar at the Granite Bistro looks out onto the pool area. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

Nearby is the Granite Bistro, which replaces the poolside restaurant. The footprint is the same – as is the location – but the interior will make it look like it's been built from scratch. This dining/drinking spot will be the last to come on board. It's been gutted pretty much to its foundation and supporting beams.

The old wood bar has been replaced with granite. A stack of granite tabletops is one corner. This gray motif matches perfectly to what's out the windows – Squaw's rugged mountains and the Granite Chief Wilderness Area.

The food here will be served more family style, and the space allows for people to bring in their own food. The smoked pheasant soup is returning and is recommended. This is where the burgers are, as well a salmon, steak, charcuterie and cheese boards.



The Granite Bistro should be open by Christmas. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

Two chairlifts will be installed to bring ambiance and a unique place for people sit and eat.

However, cooking just for skiers or those sightseeing via the tram isn't enough for everyone.

"The chef and I are pushing for nighttime dinners. It's such a magical, unique place," Crafts told *Lake Tahoe News*.

Having on-mountain evening dinners would elevate Squaw's dining experiences to a level that is rare for Tahoe area ski resorts. Most close the doors when the lifts stop running. CEO Andy Wirth hinted their dream might be realized.

Sports betting case could pay off for internet gambling

By Wayne Parry, AP

Internet gambling in the United States has been limited to just three states since it began in 2013, but it could soon get a big boost from an unlikely source: the U.S. Supreme Court.

Some gambling industry officials, regulators and analysts think that a favorable ruling by the high court in New Jersey's challenge to legalize sports betting could also lead to an expansion of internet gambling.

The Supreme Court will hear arguments in New Jersey's case on Dec. 4; a ruling could be weeks or months away. The state is taking aim at a 1992 law that forbids state-authorized sports gambling in all but four states that met a 1991 deadline to legalize it: Delaware, Montana, Nevada and Oregon. Nevada is the only state to allow single-game wagering.

Read the whole story

Running a ski resort without electricity



An early publicity photo of Sky Tavern distributed by the Reno Chamber of Commerce. Photo/Jimmie Smith/Special Collections Department, UNR Libraries

By Alicia Barber, KUNR

Today's ski resorts generally run like clockwork, every day whisking thousands of skiers high up the mountain in electric-powered chair lifts and sending them down slopes that are flattened and smoothed every night by massive grooming machines.

It's no small task. But for sheer human effort, today's preparations are nothing compared to what resort operators had to go through 70 or 80 years ago when the industry was just getting started.

Keston Ramsey opened the Sky Tavern Ski Area, just off the Mt. Rose Highway that runs between Reno and Lake Tahoe, in December of 1945. At the time, the resort had a couple of rope tows and a T-bar lift, where you wrapped one leg around an upside down metal T attached to a moving cable and let it pull you up the slope.

Read the whole story

Optimists selling Christmas trees as fundraiser

There are many tall tales about the Optimist Club and their adventures in the Christmas tree business over the last 49 years. Ben Kunibe, the ultimate Optimist, who was a member when the SLT Optimist Club first formed, was there when the club first sold trees at the Nevada Lumber Company in 1968. You can still feel his presence and joyful attitude at the new location – Highway 50 and Lakeview Avenue in South Lake Tahoe.

The Optimist have free popcorn and hot chocolate for the kids (young and old alike) as families roam through the rows of trees, searching for their perfect tree.

The net proceeds are given back to the community for youth organizations and youth programs.

Some of our volunteers are members of youth organizations themselves – organizations that the Optimist Club supports during the year. The STHS wrestling team for example brings their muscles to help move the trees.

In the early years, the club members went out into the forest and cut many of the trees that were sold.

If you are interested in learning more about the Optimist Club, come down to the tree lot or contact Terry Powers 530.544.5025.

The lot is open Monday-Friday noon-7pm and weekends from 10am-7pm.