Mancuso has best season since 2008

By USSA

SCHLADMING, Austria -– Julia Mancuso of Squaw Valley fought her way to a fifth-place giant slalom finish in the Audi FIS Alpine Wrold Cup season finale, capping her best season since 2008 with fourth in the overall standings.

Germany's Viktoria Rebensburg won the race and captured the giant slalom title for the second straight year. Mancuso, who had two victories and four other podiums, finished second in super G, fifth in the downhill standings and ninth in giant slalom.

Lindsey Vonn of Vail was 16th after the first run.

Free heel festival at Sierra

Sierra-at-Tahoe's 9th annual Telegrass Festival is April 7.

This homegrown event brings out teleskiers from all over Northern California for a celebration of the free heel life. Morning and afternoon clinics for teleskiers of every ability level, equipment demos from top manufacturers, relays and races, live music from regional bluegrass bands, beer tasting, and endless raffle prizes all combine for a festival that lets people free their heel so their mind can follow.

For more information, go online.

STHS grad takes a swing at making it in Major Leagues

By Kathryn Reed

Fans crowd Scottsdale Stadium to watch the 2012 Giants – to see their favorite players, new acquisitions and the young guys they want to learn about. Who will be on the 25-man roster is still an uncertainty. But those trying to make the team had to be invited to this audition.

No one said the road to the Major Leagues is easy.

No one said that road is short.



STHS grad Stephen Yarrow hopes to be invited to spring training with the Giants in the future. Photo/LTN

But in some ways it is. About a mile away from this downtown stadium is a training complex with four fields. This is where

everyone who is definitely not going to San Francisco is working out.

One of those players is third baseman Stephen Yarrow, who graduated from South Tahoe High School in 2007.

This is the 23-year-old's first spring training because last year this time he was wrapping up his senior year at USF. Last July he reported to the Rookie League in Arizona, having been drafted by the San Francisco Giants.

While Yarrow hasn't been given his assignment, he expects to start the season – which begins in early April – in single A ball in Augusta, Ga., in the South Atlantic League.

Pablo Sandoval, the Giants current third baseman, spent some time in that same league.

"I'm in a group with guys who will be in single, double and triple A. A lot of them have been in the system a long time," Yarrow said.

It's definitely competitive because everyone wants to get to the next level.

Yarrow's goal this season is to do well enough to get a midseason promotion.

"Usually it takes three to four years to get to the Big Leagues because there are so many levels of Minor League," Yarrow told *Lake Tahoe News*.

He added the main thing this season will be to see how his body does playing so many days in a row.

Days off during the season are rare – five in five months. That's almost 140 straight games. Minor leaguers don't play in September because this is when the Major League rosters expand to 40. They are filled with players from the lower levels.

For Yarrow, it meant a promotion to AAA in Fresno last fall. In those two games his average was .333, with two RBI.

Overall, he finished 2011 with a batting average of .289 for the 20 games he played.

Lake Tahoe News was unable to meet with Yarrow while in Scottsdale last week. Daily schedules for Minor League players are released one day in advance or that day.

“Our schedule today is quite unusual. It is as close to an off day as we receive; that being said we only practice for a couple of hours, from 10:30-12:30, but then we go straight into meetings about health insurance, 401(k) and travel policies. I have heard that these meetings may take awhile, anywhere from one to three hours,” Yarrow told *Lake Tahoe News* on March 13.

Practice has been going for a couple weeks. Scrimmages with other teams start this week.

While fans are eager to see the Major Leaguers, Yarrow said those players don’t interact a ton with guys at his level.

Just in case he isn’t able to put his finance degree to use managing the millions of dollars he makes in baseball, Yarrow spent part of the winter interning for a hedge fund in San Francisco, where he lives.

Yarrow is well aware the odds are against most people with dreams of playing for a Major League team.

“I feel incredibly lucky to still be playing baseball at 23,” Yarrow said. “The game of baseball passes everyone. For some it passes at 18; for some it passes at 42 and they get to the Hall of Fame. Eventually, it will happen. It is good I have a backup plan for when that does happen.”

Wise takes third at European X Games

By USSA

TIGNES, France -– It was a storybook gold medal run for 16-year-old Torin Yater-Wallace of Basalt, Colo., who threw down his typical smooth landings and big amplitude. His winning run featured two technical double tricks.

Teammate David Wise of Reno finished third with three cork tricks in his run. Devin Logan of West Dover, Vt., followed in neighbor Kelly Clark’s reign at the European X Games taking the 13th medal for the USA.

Wise’s run landed him a 90.33 and incorporated a switch let rodeo 1080 jap, right side cork 900 tail grab, left side cork 900 nose grab, ally oop rodeo 540 tail grab, left dub cork 1260 mute.

Vonn sets record for World

Cup points

By USSA

SCHLADMING, Austria -– Lindsey Vonn of Vail set the women's single-season Audi FIS World Cup points record Saturday with an eighth place finish in the season slalom finale. The finish elevated her to 1,980 points, 10 more than the former record set by Croatian Janica Kostelic in 2006.

Vonn can set the all-time mark for men and women, surpassing Hermann Maier's single-season record of 2,000 points set in 2000, with a 12th place or better finish in Sunday's giant slalom – the final race of the season.

Austrian Mikaela Kirchgasser won the race as teammate Marlies Schild claimed the slalom title.

World Cup rookie Mikaela Shiffrin was 15th to close the season ranked 17th in the slalom standings. Vonn was 20th.

Julia Mancuso of Squaw Valley was 20th in the race and currently sits fourth in the overall standings.

Vonn has a chance mathematically to capture her first World Cup giant slalom title on Sunday.

Bahrke finishes aerial season ranked 11th

By USSA

VOSS, Norway -– Dylan Ferguson of Amesbury, Mass., took fifth in the FIS Freestyle Aerials World Cup Finals in Voss, Norway, today, locking him into fourth in the season overall standings.

Nevin Brown of Ohio finished a career-best eighth. Dmitri Dashinski of Belarus was the men's winner, with China's Mengtao XU snagging the women's top spot.

Scotty Bahrke of Tahoe City, who picked up a career first win in Kreischberg, Austria, finished the season ranked 11th.

"World Cup Finals were pretty fun. For me the jumping didn't go too hot, but the overall experience was awesome," Bahrke said.

Go for the roller coasters, stay for the animals

By Kathryn Reed

VALLEJO – I have yet to meet a roller coaster I didn't like.

Old rickety ones like the Big Dipper at Santa Cruz, or the stomach-in-your-throat Big Shot at the Stratosphere in Las Vegas, or the 85-year-old Cyclone at Coney Island, or Space Mountain at Disneyland. Love them all.

Growing up in the Bay Area we would go to Great America. All those rides. And the games to play. I don't know how long I had that nearly 3-foot-tall stuffed animal in my room.



Six Flags in Vallejo opens March 17 for the 2012 season. Photos/Kathryn Reed

Last fall I went to Six Flags Discovery Kingdom for the first time in years. Today begins the 2012 season at this Vallejo park that is the only combined marine life, wildlife, and ride theme park in the United States.

With names like Pandemonium, Hammerhead Shark, Cobra and Voodoo, it’s impossible not to scream. My screams, though, are in exhilaration. Sue’s, well, those were more like screams of fear.

She is one who has to be dragged onto a roller coaster. I learned from my parents you should run to these twisty, turny, loopty-loop contraptions. Then race to get back in line. Food is the only thing that should stop the fun.

And always go on the water ride first thing so you can dry off as the day goes on.

Sue, well, she thought the animals should be seen.

OK, the shows – especially the dolphin one – were entertaining.

Seeing a tiger go after food under water was pretty darn good, too.

It’s definitely one of those places to spend the entire day. We didn’t stay the night, but I have childhood memories of roller coasters being even more fun when the sky was black and those neon lights sparkled.

Things to know:

The park opens today for the season, but won’t be open seven days a week consistently until Memorial Day weekend.

For hours, prices, directions and more info, go online.

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U.S. fourth in team skiing competition

By USSA

SCHLADMING, Austria – Olympian Nolan Kasper of Warren, Vt., pocketed almost $5,500 Friday by producing the fastest run of the nations team event with a scorching 19.01 semifinal heat.

Despite his run and Julia Mancuso of Squaw Valley winning all her heats, the U.S. Ski Team, which also included Resi Stiegler (Jackson Hole, Wyo.) and Tim Jitloff (Reno) finished fourth behind the winning host country of Austria.

The World Cup Finals continue Saturday with women’s slalom and men’s giant slalom.

Anderson, White on podium at European X Games

By USSA

TIGNES, France – Olympian and double threat Shaun White who rides at Northstar took his second gold at European X Games Friday in the slopestyle competition. He executed yet another almost perfect score with a 97.00 on his second run with three doubles.

Jamie Anderson of South Lake Tahoe who rides at Sierra-at-Tahoe mimicked the nearly perfect run of White to take the top spot for the women.

Anderson’s winning run scored a 98.00 and went like this: cab to 270 off, half cab in to backside tailslide to fakie off, cab 720, switch backside 540, frontside 720 tail slide, to 270 out on the rainbow rail.

This is White’s 13th X Games gold medal and 18th X Games medal; his last time competing in X Games slopestyle was in 2009.

Chas Guldemond of Reno finished in sixth position after washing out on his landings.

A total of nine medals have been won for the U.S. out of a possible 15 with three more finals to go.

Holland in top three overall for World Cup

By USSA

VALMALENCO, Italy -– Young gun Jacqueline Hernandez of Londonderry, Vt., took the women’s snowboardcross win today for the first World Cup podium of her career – after only six career starts.

U.S. Snowboarding’s Nick Baumgartner of Iron River, Mich., was seventh.

Nate Holland of Squaw Valley placed ninth which locks him into third for the overall World Cup standings after the season finale.