Ganong confident Olympic medal in his future

Publisher's note: ***This is one of a series of stories about Lake Tahoe area athletes who hope to compete in the 2018 Olympics in South Korea.***

By Kathryn Reed

PARK CITY, Utah – In a sport where fractions of a second can make the difference between being on the podium or not, what one wears can impact the final outcome.

"We were playing catch up the last few years with suit development. Now we may have something better," Travis Ganong said.

Ganong, who was born in Truckee and calls Squaw Valley ski resort home, knows all about fractions of a second. At the Sochi Olympic Games in 2014 he placed fifth in downhill. He was 0.31 seconds from bronze, 0.35 from silver, and 0.41 from gold.

Will a better engineered racing suit make the difference? Maybe.

He and other U.S. Ski Team members were in North Carolina in August testing suits at the wind tunnel there. In a sport where speeds can reach 80 mph, aerodynamics and weight are the fine details that complement the athleticism required to compete at the most elite level.

Russia was Ganong's first Olympics. He also competed in super G, where he placed 23. Since then, he has been on the downhill World Cup podium four times.



Travis Ganong is more confident in his ability to medal at the 2018 Winter Games. Photo/Kathryn Reed

At the U.S. Ski Team media summit last month in Utah, Ganong talked about how much different the course will be in PyeongChang, South Korea, compared to Sochi. He called the 2018 course “mellow,” “not that steep” and “not scary.” He also said it’s fun, there will be no room for error and that it will look great to the television audience.

While there is a new team event for the alpine racers, Ganong is opting not to participate, but instead is focusing on downhill and super G.

This time around Ganong will have experience to count on. Tactically, he said, he now knows when to push and when to hold back. Before it was all about going 100 percent.

“The mental part is what separates athletes,” Ganong said. “Now it’s easy to flip a switch when I need to go faster.”

His girlfriend, who skis for the Canadian team, is one of his

sounding boards. “She’s my best mental coach,” Ganong said.

Teammates and those who helped define men’s skiing in the United States are also integral to his development. While they will be competing against each other for a spot on the team going to South Korea in February, there is a solidarity between them.

Ganong’s peers came up with the American downhiller vest. That jean vest circulates among the guys based on who placed the best. Patches and artwork have been added. It’s a source of pride to wear it in public after a race.

“We are a band of brothers. We try to beat the Europeans. We work together,” Ganong said.

Daron Rahlves, the most decorated male skier in the U.S. in downhill and Super G, calls with encouragement. He, too, lives in Truckee.

It is Truckee and Squaw that are still home to Ganong. He trains there in the off-season.

Skiing is what he knows. He was 1½ years old when he first hit the slopes. Today he wants to give back to the sport. He’s doing so by being a mentor to athletes at the Squaw Valley Academy. There are also two scholarships in Ganong’s name.

Ganong wants to instill in these youngsters a sense of enjoying the whole mountain and not just focusing on gates.

“I want to bring the fun back to ski racing,” he said. While he doesn’t see being a coach in his future, what Ganong does envision is “sharing the passion” of skiing and racing with generations to come even while he pursues his dreams to be the top downhill racer in the world.

Star Guide: Moon takes center stage

By Tony Berendsen

The moon is the Earth’s natural satellite, created as the result of a Mars-size object colliding with our planet billions of years ago. It is the most noticeable celestial object in our sky besides our star the sun, and is visible at night and during the day.

The moon causes the tides that mariners have timed for ages, inspired poems of love and creepy stories of lunatics. It has also inspired a generation of humans, timed with the development of rocket technology to test our ability to adventure beyond our precious atmosphere and walk on the moon’s surface.

Oct. 28 was International Observe the Moon Night. Thousands of people all over the world took part in a worldwide effort to take note of the moon, observe it through telescopes, and remember the recent history of it exploration by humans.

Many like myself grew up in a time of space adventure – not science fiction stories in books for movies, but the reality of sending astronauts into space to explore the moon. Astronauts became the heroes of a generation, spurring interest in science, math and engineering.

The Challenger Learning Center of Northern Nevada joined with UNR to put on a local event for Observe the Moon Night. They offered telescopic observing of the moon through university telescopes, and a showing of the documentary film “Mission Control, The Unsung Heroes of Mission Control.”

If you want to so some observing on your own, by eye, binoculars, or using a telescope the **Astronomical League** offers lunar observing programs. The programs are a great way to learn to recognize features on the moon, and learn about them at the same time. If you complete the requirements for observing per their rules they will even award a certificate to you acknowledging your effort.

Another great way to learn about the moon is to download a lunar viewing app on your phone or tablet. There are a lot of great free apps too. Not only can they tell you the dates of different phases of the moon, but maps show the names and locations of lunar features.

On July 20, 1969, humans first set foot on the Moon. It was an amazing event for humans to accomplish, venturing beyond our atmosphere, breaking the gravitational bonds of our earth. We walked, drove, planted a flag, collected rocks and soil during our visits.

Tony Berendsen runs Tahoe Star Tours. He may be reached at 775.232.0844 or tony@tahoestartours.com.

Fire operations planned for D.L. Bliss State Park

California State Parks will kick off the Tahoe Fire and Fuels Team fall prescribed fire program on Nov. 1.

If conditions are favorable, prescribed fire operations will take place in D.L. Bliss State Park on the southwest end of Lake Tahoe. This operation was originally scheduled for earlier this month, but was delayed due to resource needs

elsewhere.

Smoke may be visible and is expected to last through the week. To receive prescribed fire notifications, send an email to pa_ltbmu@fs.fed.us.

Before prescribed fire operations are conducted, agencies post road signs around areas affected by prescribed fire, send email notifications and update the local fire information line at 530.543.2816.

Congress considers lethal methods to manage rangeland

By April Corbin, Las Vegas Sun

In July, the House Appropriations Committee voted to remove language from the Interior Department's budget that prohibits the "destruction of healthy, unadopted wild horses and burros" managed by the Bureau of Land Management in the American West.

Groups like the American Wild Horse Campaign that seek to protect the animals have described the change as "a death sentence" for more than 46,000 wild horses and burros cared for by the BLM and an additional 40,000 loose on the range considered in excess of "appropriate management levels." On the other side, rangeland advocates describe euthanasia as unfortunate but necessary for protecting land they say has been ravaged by overgrazing from animals that lack any natural predators.

Rep. Mark Amodei, R-Nev., sits on the House Appropriations Committee and supported lifting the prohibition, which was

pushed forth by Rep. Chris Stewart, R-Utah.

Read the whole story

Prescribed fires planned near Truckee

The Truckee Ranger District is planning a prescribed fire of between 40 and 90 acres near Sagehen Creek on Highway 89 west of the highway starting Oct. 30.

A private contractor will be burning near Independence Lake.

This will only take place as long as weather, fuel conditions, and smoke dispersal remains favorable. Predicted weather forecasts over the week is for a more wet and cold weather pattern.

Winter storm expected to hit Tahoe on weekend

Put away the rakes and get out the snow shovels because measurable white stuff is in forecast starting Nov. 3.

The National Weather Service in Reno says gusty winds, rain and snow will start Friday, with heavy snow arriving Saturday and Sunday.

By Sunday the snow level will reach 5,500 feet. One to 3 feet of snow is possible above 7,500 feet.

For road conditions, click on the state icons on the home page of *Lake Tahoe News.*

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

When last place is an accomplishment in itself



Katelyn Feeney has the strength to smile as she finishes the Lake Tahoe Marathon – in last place. Photo/Jessie Marchesseau

By Jessie Marchesseau

Eight hours, 45 minutes and 22 seconds after she started, Katelyn Feeney crossed the finish line.

It had been a long day, but the journey was beautiful. Feeney, 25, had just finished her first marathon. She may have been the 213 finisher, the very last one, but she had done it.

Her mom, Danette, was there waiting at the finish line with a smile and a hug.

“I am so proud of her,” Danette Feeney said. “I am *so* proud of her.”

The Lake Tahoe Marathon has been an annual event for 23 years. Les Wright, the event organizer, has seen all sorts of reasons for running a marathon in those years. He said some do it because it’s a goal which they have been working toward for a long time, some people do it because they have overcome a serious illness or lost a significant amount of weight, and some people do it simply because they love to run. Regardless of their reason, for nearly everyone, just finishing is an accomplishment.

“It’s a physical challenge,” Wright told *Lake Tahoe News*. “After my first marathon, I felt 10 feet tall for a month.”

Feeney, who lives in the Monterey area, had signed up for the Lake Tahoe Marathon back in August on somewhat of a whim. She hadn’t been training for a marathon or fulfilling some lifelong dream. She signed up “just to be able to do it.”

“I wanted to run somewhere beautiful so no matter what the outcome was, it was still going to be a good day,” she said of her choice to sign up for the Lake Tahoe Marathon.

She chose well. It was a beautiful course and a beautiful day. She walked most of the race and ran a little; she said jokingly that her running pace was slower than some people’s walk. But she found everyone so supportive, especially of the participants in the back. People would drive by honking and cheering. People would offer her water bottles. One person who was riding by on their bicycle actually dismounted and walked

alongside her for more than a mile, just to show her support and offer a little bit of company.



Katelyn Feeney will always be able to say she is a Lake Tahoe Marathon finisher. Photo/Jessie Marchesseau

I joined Feeney for the last mile and a half or so of the race. We talked and laughed, and after 25 long miles, she still had a smile on her face. She set our pace at a fast walk until the final corner when she summoned her last bit of energy to run across the finish line. Even though the finishing arch had already been taken down, the band had gone home and the booths were packed up, when she ran across that line, horns were honking, people were cheering and her name

was finally announced over the loudspeaker.

Though this was her first full marathon, it wasn't Feeney's first race. She has participated in several half marathons in the past including races in Africa and Germany when she was studying abroad. She always tried to get friends and acquaintances to join her in the races.

"It was fun to run people's first half marathon with them because they get to see what they're capable of," she said.

It has been three years since she last did a half marathon, however Feeney had no doubts she was capable of finishing the full 26.2 miles of the Lake Tahoe Marathon.

"I knew my body could go that far," she said as we walked toward the finish line.

On Oct. 15, 2017, Katelyn Feeney finished her first marathon, but it likely will not be her last. She has a new goal: to walk half the marathon, and run the other half.

"I don't quite feel like Superman with kryptonite yet, and I want that feeling," she said.

Christmas tree permits available Nov. 1

Permits to cut Christmas trees on the Carson and Bridgeport ranger districts of the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest will be available for purchase beginning Nov. 1.

Christmas tree permits must be purchased in person and are issued on a first-come, first-serve basis for $10 each.

Permits are nonrefundable and nontransferable, and are valid through Dec. 25.

Each Christmas tree permit is valid for the cutting of one tree in specific areas on lands managed by the ranger district for which the permit was purchased. A map and cutting rules and regulations will be included with the permit. The permit does not authorize cutting on private, state, or other federal lands. Christmas trees also cannot be harvested within developed campgrounds, administrative sites, or designated wilderness areas.

Audit: Utah's Olympic facilities need $39M in upgrades

By Lisa Riley Roche, KSL

SALT LAKE CITY – Utah needs to spend more than $39 million to ready the ski jumps, speedskating oval, bobsled track and other Olympic facilities for hosting another Winter Games, according to a legislative audit released Tuesday.

"Maintaining Olympic assets is essential for an effective Olympic bid," the legislative auditor general's report stated, recommending that the state support ongoing improvements and upgrades to the former 2002 Winter Games venues.

The report, delivered to the Legislative Audit Subcommittee, was written before this month's announcement that an Olympic exploratory committee is being formed to look at bidding for the 2026 or 2030 Winter Games.

Read the whole story

Tahoe women place 2nd in Ariz. tennis tourney



Kae Reed reaches for a backhand with Sharla Freeman in the finals on Oct. 27. Photo/Barbara Cooper

TUCSON, Ariz. – It came down to a tiebreaker to decide who would win the 4.0 division at the Meet, Play, Love tennis tournament on Oct. 27, with the Tahoe Tough team based in Zephyr Cove coming up short.

The eight women associated with Zephyr Cove Tennis Club reached the finals on Friday against a team based out of the Willamette Valley in Oregon.

Tahoe finished the three-day tournament in first place, having beaten the other eight teams in each contest. Two were 3-0, while six were 2-1. This meant Tahoe Tough won 18 of 24 individual matches.

The finals were a duel between the top two teams.



Christy Funk and Kathy Wharton in the finals for Tahoe Tough. Photo/Barbara Cooper

The lone winners in the final round for Tahoe were Kae Reed and Sharla Freeman who won 6-7, 6-1, 10-3. (A 10-point tiebreaker is played in lieu of a full third set.) Freeman went the whole tournament undefeated.

With the Oregon team winning the contest against the Tahoe duo of Kathy Wharton and Christy Funk 6-4, 6-1, it came down to the final court to decide who would leave the desert as champions.



Tricia Ward and Karen Diehl kept their opponents guessing most of the tournament. Photo/Kathryn Reed

The final match was a fierce battle until the end. After Oregon took the first set 6-1, Tahoe's Tricia Ward and Karen Diehl took the second in a tiebreaker. The third set tiebreaker went to Oregon 10-3.

Rounding out the Tahoe team were Barbara Cooper and Becky Smothermon.

Also representing ZCTC were the Tahoe Blue Angels. They placed third in the 4.0-4.5 division. Players were Holly Rittiman, Joyce Youngs, Jenny Bentley, Claire Perry, Krista Kip, and Mona Smith.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report