Final Kinder Cup Race on March 20

The Heavenly Ski and Snowboard Foundation will host the Kinder Kup Race Series finals at Heavenly Mountain Resort March 20 from 8am to 2pm.

Open to all skiers and snowboarders age 6 and under as of Dec. 31, 2010, the Kinder Kup series is designed to introduce young athletes to competition in a friendly environment. No previous race experience necessary. Entry is $20 and includes a World Cup only competitor lift ticket.

On-site registration is available the morning of the event at the Heavenly Foundation building from 8am to 9am. Practice begins at 9am, each competitor is allowed two practice runs; the race starts at 10am. Every competitor is awarded a participation medal and a swag bag filled with goodies. Overall champions will be awarded trophies at the final event.

The foundation will serve coffee and bake sale items throughout the morning. The barbecue begins at noon and combos include a burger or hot dog, chips and a drink for a $7 donation to the foundation.

Wind, snow and more snow blowing to Tahoe

Winter is holding out as long as it can. Even though the calendar says spring will arrive Sunday, don’t count on it – at least not in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

The National Weather Service in Reno has issued a winter storm watch from Friday afternoon through late that evening in Tahoe.



Perhaps people prayed too hard for snow when the Fallen Leaf Lake chapel was open. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Snow could be coming down at a rate of more than 2 inches an hour.

The Weather Service is calling for accumulations of 6 to 12 inches for Northeast California, mainly west of Highway 395 and in the basin below 7,000 feet.

For spots above 7,000 feet, which includes the passes, up to 1.5 feet could fall.

Fifteen to 25 mph sustained winds could be associated with this storm, with gusts up to 45 mph. Ridge gusts may hit 75 mph in the Sierra. This all is a recipe for whiteout conditions.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Ski report: Get your green on



Another storm tomorrow, so get out there today.

Here is the ski report from Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.

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19 teams competing in Tour of California named

The 2011 field of professional cycling teams has been named for Amgen Tour of California that begins in Stateline May 15.

The lineup of teams includes 19 elite international and domestic squads for the sixth-annual event, May 15-22. Fourteen have participated before.

The teams are:

* Sky ProCycling (GBR)

* Rabobank Cycling Team (NED)

* Team Garmin-Cervélo (USA)

* HTC-Highroad (USA)

* Team RadioShack (USA)

* Liquigas-Cannondale (ITA)

* Saxo Bank Sungard (DEN)

* Leopard Trek (LUX)

* BMC Racing Team (USA)

* Team NetApp (GER)

* Team Type 1-sanofi aventis (USA)

* Team Spidertech Powered By C10 (CAN)

* UnitedHealthcare Pro Cycling (USA)

* Movistar Team (COL)

* Jamis-Sutter Home (USA)

* Kelly Benefit Strategies – Optum Health (USA)

* Bissell Pro Cycling (USA)

* Jelly Belly p/b Kenda (USA)

* Kenda/5-Hour Energy Pro Cycling p/b Geargrinder (USA).

Disappearance of minnows from Tahoe concerns scientists

By Jeff Delong, Reno Gazette-Journal

Lake Tahoe’s native minnows appear to be dropping significantly in number, with declining water clarity and predation by non-native warm water fish possible factors in the population crash.

Densities of minnows surveyed at 26 sites around the lake declined by 58 percent between 1988 and 2009, according to new research by scientists at University of Nevada, Reno and Ohio’s Miami University.

“That’s not good. That’s bad news,” said Sudeep Chandra, a UNR fisheries expert.

“I was surprised the decline was that much,” Chandra said. “The interesting question is what will be the future?”

Chandra and colleagues surveyed native fish populations in the shallow depths of Tahoe’s near shore, home to minnows such as Lahontan redside shiners and speckled dace.

Minnow numbers dropped significantly since the last such survey more than 20 years ago, with populations of redside shiners alone dropping between 24 percent and 100 percent in 42 percent of surveyed locations.

“I would say that yes, they are in trouble,” said Christine Ka Lai Ngai, another UNR researcher in the fish study. “And if we don’t do anything about it, they will be in more trouble.”

One possible contributor to the minnows’ decline is competition or predation by non-native warm water fish including largemouth bass and bluegill.

Read the whole story

Mancuso on top of podium in World Cup downhill

By Ski Racing Magazine

LENZERHEIDE, Switzerland – It had been a long four years since Squaw Valley's Julia Mancuso had topped a World Cup podium. She was back with vengeance today as women's competition at the 2011 World Cup Finals kicked off with the downhill and plenty of excitement in Lenzerheide, Switzerland.

Mancuso's impressive win, the fifth of her career, left no doubters as she screamed down the course 0.81 seconds faster than second-place finisher, Swiss Lara Gut. Downhill world champion Austrian Elizabeth Goergl finished third, 1.15 seconds back. Mancuso's last win came in March 2007 with a downhill victory in Tarvisio, Italy.

"It's the first time in four years, it's great to be back winning," said Mancuso. "I watched Lara ski so I knew I had to ski really fast because she nailed it. That's all it was, all or nothing this time, last downhill of the season so it feels good."

Vail's Lindsey Vonn claimed her fourth consecutive downhill globe mathematically two weeks ago in Tarvisio but was finally able to lay a big kiss on her trophy today after finishing fourth. Perhaps the biggest news of the day also followed Vonn as she took back the overall lead from German Maria Riesch (17th today) for the first time since late December. Today's results saw a 50-point swing in the overall standings as Vonn went from 23 points behind to 27 points ahead of her friend Riesch with three races (SG, GS, SL) ahead before the season ends this weekend.

"It was tough conditions out there today with really soft snow and flat light," said Vonn. "It was really easy to make

mistakes and unfortunately I made one on the top of the course in a pretty bad place and lost a lot of speed but I was able to ski the bottom well. Fourth place is still a great result, I'm really happy for Julia for winning, she skied amazingly well."

The win was enough to move Mancuso into third in the season-long downhill standings behind Vonn and Riesch in second.

Mancuso, who had the second fastest time in yesterday's training run, said the turny course fit her style.

"Leaving the start gate I knew I had to push really hard and be fast and I wanted to win," said Mancuso, the penultimate racer down the course. "I knew it would be a good opportunity here for me and those don't come around all the time so I took advantage of it and I'm just really happy.

"I've been working through injuries and working hard for the past four years and I'm finally back on the podium, it feels great," said Mancuso who was also back in the top three of any discipline standings for the first time since 2007. "I switched to Voelkl skis [this season] and everything has been working really well for me so it just gives me a lot of confidence that next year is going to be even better."

Ski report: Wet and snowy



Snow is coming down, roads are not plowed, and Highway 50 between South Tahoe and Carson City is a driver's nightmare.

Other than that, here is the ski report from Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.

Game allows skiers to virtually ride Alpine Meadows

Some mountains are known for their gentle side, while others offer a wild ride. Alpine Meadows Ski Resort is trying to do both with the interactive game The Alpinizer.

It is designed to show off the innovation and fun of skiing the mountain – and making Alpine Meadows even more difficult to get out of one's head.

The Alpinizer means skiers never have to leave their computer to enjoy the mountain's slopes.

"We developed the Alpinizer as a way for our guests to enjoy Alpine Meadows before and after their visits," Deanna Gescheider, vice president of JMA Sierra Ventures LLC, parent company of Alpine Meadows, said in a press release.

The game includes 13 mountain trail levels.

For more information, go online.

Big Mountain Battle headed to

Squaw

Helly Hansen’s Big Mountain Battle returns to Squaw Valley for the third year on March 19. The event was postponed earlier this winter due to heavy snowfall at the resort.

The Big Mountain Battle’s Squaw Valley stop is a favorite among local skiers. The event will challenge teams of two to ski and snowboard a big-mountain course on Squaw Valley’s legendary terrain. Teams are tracked in real time by Flaik GPS devices as they hit virtual checkpoints, strategically placed across the mountain.

First-place finishers will win $2,000 worth of Helly gear, prizes from sponsors Thule, Powder and Dakine, and free entry to the final Battle in the Bowls in Aspen/Snowmass on March 27. Second- and third-place finishers will also be awarded an array of prizes from sponsors.

Cost for the event is $85 per team and includes two Helly Hansen base layers, valued at $45 each as well as a year-long subscription to Powder magazine. For more information and to register, go online.

Storm expected to bring snow to basin, higher elevations

Time to get out the shovel because snow is in the forecast overnight.

The National Weather Service in Reno has issued a winter weather advisory from 8 tonight to 5pm Wednesday for

elevations above 7,000 feet

Below 7,000 feet about a half foot of snow is forecast, while above that elevation between 8 and 16 inches are possible.



Looking for that pot of gold in South Lake Tahoe on March 15. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Passes could be problematic for the morning commute especially as the rain soaked roads freeze.

The Weather Service is also warning of avalanche danger on steep terrain above 7,000 feet.

Winds are expected to be strong throughout this storm, too.

– Lake Tahoe News staff report