Ski report: Starting the morning below zero



Powder, everywhere powder – and blue sky.

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

Jitloff's 5th in super combined his best finish in 2 years

By U.S. Ski Team

BANSKO, Bulgaria -– World Champion Ted Ligety of Park City matched his career best Audi FIS Alpine World Cup super combined result with fourth Saturday as the men's World Cup made its debut in Bansko.

Tim Jitloff of Reno was eighth for his best result in two years and Colby Granstrom of Lake Stevens, Wash., just missed scoring his first World Cup points finishing 31st despite posting the 15th fastest slalom run. Italian super G World champion Christof Innerhofer won as first run leader Jean-Baptiste Grange of France went out in the super G portion, which was run after the slalom due to forecasted fog.

Official results, Audi FIS Alpine World Cup, Bansko, Bulgaria, Super Combined

1. Christof Innerhofer, Italy, 2:23.87

2. Felix Neureuther, Germany, 2:23.88

3. Thomas Mermillod Blondin, France, 2:24.20

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4. Ted Ligety, Park City, UT, 2:24.37

8. Tim Jitloff, Reno, NV, 2:24.78

31. Colby Granstrom, Lake Stevens, WA, 2:29.39

–

Did not start super G

Will Brandenburg, Spokane, WA

–

Did not finish slalom

Nolan Kasper, Warren, VT

Vonn wins World Cup downhill; Mammoth's Cook takes 5th

By Ski Racing News Service

ARE, Sweden – Lindsey Vonn of Vail looked like her World Cup downhill-winning self again today, taking her seventh victory

of the season following three weeks of dealing with the symptoms of a concussion.

Vonn, who won a world championship silver medal in the downhill two weeks ago, kept a tight line down the 2731-meter Olympia course in tough, flat lit conditions to finish in one minute, 40.93 seconds, 0.13 seconds ahead of Slovenian Tina Maze in second.

“Today was tough, it was pretty dark and you had to be extremely clean to be fast – that’s a difficult combination,” said Vonn.

Overall leader and yesterday’s super combined winner, German Maria Riesch was 0.21 seconds back in third place to carefully stay on top of the standings by 176 points with 1416 points to Vonn’s 1240.

Vonn, the reigning Olympic champion in the discipline, maintains the downhill lead with 520 points over Riesch’s 417. The duo have combined to win the past 15 World Cup downhills. Three World Cup downhills remain on this season’s women’s calendar as Vonn battles from behind for her fourth consecutive overall title.

Vonn’s concussion, suffered in a training run fall on Feb. 2, threw her normal training and competition schedule out the window leading into the Garmisch-Partenkirchen World Championships. In the weeks that followed, Vonn was evaluated daily by doctors as her participation on the slopes was hit and miss depending on test results. After a sluggish, seventh-place performance in the opening super G, Vonn pulled out of the super combine between runs to continue resting. Days later she finished second in the downhill, then left the championships with the giant slalom and slalom still on the table, heading to a wellness hotel to prepare for the remainder of the World Cup season.

Today’s victory takes 26-year-old Vonn’s World Cup career

total to an even 40, putting her fifth in the all time rankings, just one win behind still active Swede Anja Paerson (DNF today). It was her third win in Are.

Riesch, a double bronze medalist at her home championships in Garmisch, stepped up to her 13th World Cup podium of the season. She has had at least one top-three finish in all five disciplines.

Behind Vonn's victory, the U.S. women had a tremendous day.

Stacey Cook finished fifth after putting down an impressive run (1:41.99) in the No. 3 bib, taking the early lead and holding through the next eight racers until the top-ranked women were ushered in by Maze. It was Cook's second-best World Cup result ever since finishing fourth at Lake Louise in 2006. Cook gave credit for her best result in four years to some western U.S. powder skiing.

"Last week I got to go home and free ski some powder in Mammoth, so I came back with just a really good feeling and really loving skiing," said Cook, who had never been on the track before. "I just had a really positive attitude and tried to keep that freeskiing mentality that I had going in Mammoth here in Sweden."

Recently minted world championship super G silver medalist Julia Mancuso of Squaw Valley never quite found the right line and finished 11th, 1.51 seconds off the wining time. Leanne Smith and Laurenne Ross also found the points in 18, and 25th, respectively.

Today's race was marred by the horrific crash of Swiss racer Nadja Kamer. High on the course, Kamer took a turn too wide and collided with the safety netting on the left side of the course, sending her somersaulting across the course, finally coming to rest in the right side fences. She was taken down in a ski patrol toboggan. The race was delayed for about 15 minutes. According to early reports, Kamer escaped with only

bruising on her left wrist and hand and will be fitted with a cast.

Study delves into life of hibernating bears

By Joe Palca, NPR

For the first time, scientists say they have been able to monitor a bear's vital signs continuously during a six-month period of hibernation. To their surprise, the researchers discovered that despite lowering its metabolism by 75 percent, a hibernating bear's internal temperature barely drops at all.

The bear study took place at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks. The bears spent the winter in a hibernaculum — basically a big box. The researchers weren't sure whether the bears would be willing to spend the winter in this small, artificial cave.

"We anticipated they might just tear the place up or go on strike or something," says Brian Barnes, one of the authors of the new study. "But they actually showed very natural behavior of getting ready to hibernate. They curl up, they go to sleep. They begin to quiet their heart rate, slow their breathing and their metabolic rate plunges."

The fact that a bear could reduce its metabolism so much with such a small drop in temperature was a surprise. Barnes says two factors appear to be responsible. First, a bear has a lot of fat and thick fur, so it is well-insulated. Second, when a bear's internal temperature drops below about 90 degrees Fahrenheit (99 degrees is normal for a bear), it starts to

shiver. The shivering produces heat, and the bear's temperature rises a few degrees. This periodic shivering occurs throughout the winter.

Read the whole story

Mancuso 8th in World Cup super combined

By Ski Racing Magazine

ARE, Sweden – Just six days after polishing off two weeks of World Championship competition in Garmisch-Partekirchen, Germany, the fastest women on snow dug right back into the World Cup season today with the second super combined of the season in Are, Sweden as overall leader Maria Riesch of Germany extended her lead with her fifth victory of the season.

Though it was "just another World Cup," the intense competitiveness of the World Championships seemed to spill over onto the site of the 2007 title meet as eight fresh worlds medalists filled the top ten spots today.

The run of the day came from recently crowned giant slalom world champ Tina Maze of Slovenia who took to the Gaestrappet slalom course with an intensity none could match. Standing eighth (0.76 seconds back) after the super G leg, Maze ripped to the fastest slalom time of the day in 45.19 seconds then watched as the top seven first-run leaders tried to catch up.

Only first-run runner up Riesch, with a 0.60-second lead on Maze coming out of the slalom start house, was able to beat

her as she hung on to 0.40 seconds of her advantage to claim her third career Cup super combined victory. She is also the reigning Olympic champion in the discipline. With today's win, Riesch edged past Vail's Lindsey Vonn (sixth today) and Austrian Elizabeth Goergl (tied for second) in the super combined standings with a 145 to 140 advantage and only one combined race remaining on this season's World Cup calendar. Riesch, a double bronze medalist at her home in Garmisch, was also able to tack on 60 more points to her lead over Vonn in the overall standings, which she controls 1356 to 1140. Vonn is the reigning three-time overall champ.

Brand new double world champion (downhill, super G), Goergl was able to take her third-place standing after the super G all the way to the last podium spot. It was her third career World Cup podium in the super combined and her 27th overall.

Local favorite Anja Paerson was obviously fighting hard for a home podium but wasn't able to improve on her fourth-place standing after the super G, missing the top three by only two hundredths of a second.

Vonn led the way into the afternoon slalom leg with a 0.16-second lead on Riesch in the morning super G run, but her recent slalom troubles (four consecutive first-run DNFs) continued as her advantage dwindled down to a 1.16-second deficit and she finished sixth. It was the first time Vonn missed the podium in a World Cup super combined that she finished since March of 2008, a string that includes six top-three results and three wins.

Vonn, the winner of this year's only previous World Cup super combined, returned to her regular World Cup training and competition schedule in this week's downhill training runs after pulling out of the World Championships following her silver medal performance in the downhill. She missed the nations team even, the giant slalom and the slalom as she headed to a wellness hotel to continue recovering from a

concussion she sustained Feb. 2. She told reporters Friday that she felt fully recovered from the head injury that had her feeling “cloudy” two weeks ago.

Teammate Julia Mancuso of Squaw Valley was close behind in eighth place after standing fifth in the super G. Leanne Smith earned her ninth scoring result of the season in 29th.

Marie-Michele Gagnon was the only Canadian to finish, pulling in a 19th-place result to jump way up from standing 36th after the super G leg.

Ski report: It’s dumping



Wind it likely to impact lift operations on the upper mountain of some resorts.

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

Snow piling up throughout Lake Tahoe Basin

By Kathryn Reed

Snow is swirling through the Lake Tahoe Basin as another

winter storm brings whiteout conditions to the area. Visibility on Highway 50 through South Lake Tahoe before 8am was horrible, making it impossible for some to even get to the state line.

It’s making driving hazardous in and around the Tahoe area.



Everyone has to have their shoveling priorities -- like getting access to the hot tub. Photo/Kathryn Reed

School buses will not be adding to the chaos because classes have been canceled at all the lake schools on the South Shore. However, Lake Tahoe Community College’s website says classes are in session Friday.

Tahoe Truckee Unified schools are open.

Washoe County School District is on a two-hour delay, with winter bus stops in effect.

About 6 inches had fallen by 7am Friday.

The winter storm warning issued by the National Weather Service in Reno remains in effect through 4am Saturday. The worst of it is supposed to come overnight. Expect 12-18 inches

at the lake and 18-30 inches above 7,000 feet.

Friday’s high in South Tahoe is expected to be 26 degrees with a low of 10; Saturday will be 19 and minus 2; and Sunday 30 (with some sun) and 7.

Once this storm blows through, another is on the horizon for Tuesday.

Concord cuts programs to Lake Tahoe camp

By Dana Guzzetti, Contra Costa Times

Despite drastic city budget cuts, Camp Concord will be open for families this summer.

However, youth and teen programs at the rustic 29-acre Lake Tahoe camp will be suspended this year. Concord’s Day Camp and Back Yard Explorer programs will continue to be open.

Every department in the city has made significant cuts to its budget this year. Concord Mayor Laura Hoffmeister said that $18 million has been cut from the general fund since 2008-2009 and that city staff has been reduced by 24 percent.

“I hope somewhere down the road we can reinstate teen resident camping,” said Joan Carrico, Concord director of Community and Recreation Services. “(Teen camp) is very staff intensive. With no parents present it requires a higher level of supervision.”

Read the whole story

Drinking running club winds up in court against Aerojet

By Andy Furillo, Sacramento Bee

They call it a “hash” and they hold them from Lake Tahoe to Davis – runs for the fun-loving who like to mix a few beers in with their jogging miles.

There’s the “Donut Dash Hash” scheduled for next month in Land Park, and for anybody who can’t wait for the “4/20 Hash” on April 20, there’s the “Can’t Wait for 4/20 Hash” on April 16.

But some of the fun has gone out of the hash in the last few years. A routine, mid-week jog that veered into Aerojet-General spawned a lawsuit and a countersuit. It also cooled off the mojo of the Sacramento Hash House Harriers, the local franchise of a worldwide organization that calls itself “The Drinking Club with a Running Problem.”

“People were quite scared afterward,” said Daniel, a 45-year-old South Lake Tahoe engineer whose telephone number is on the harriers’ website, but who declined to give his last name for fear it would affect his job.

The trouble began on May 16, 2007, the date of a hash on Aerojet property that one member described as “epic.” The run started at the Nimbus Fish Hatchery, crept along the Folsom South Canal, and then cut off into 8,500 acres of Aerojet wildland, where scientists test rocket launchers and cruise missiles and chemicals that can kill on contact.

Read the whole story

Lone wolverine continues to roam Sierra

By Tom Knudson, Sacramento Bee

“Picture a weasel – and most of us can do that, for we have met the little demon of destruction, that small atom of insensate courage. … Multiply that mite by some fifty times and you have the likeness of a wolverine.”

Ernest Thompson Seton – “Lives of Game Animals, Vol. II,” 1925 – 1927

He wanders long distances at night, alone.

He curls up under wind-stunted trees at the timberline.

And from a distance, he can hear the rumble of traffic along Interstate 80.

But almost no one has ever seen him.

“He’s gone before you even have a clue he’s there,” said Amanda Shufelberger, a wildlife biologist with Sierra Pacific Industries who has tracked the animal across the Sierra Nevada since 2008. “He does not want to see you.”

Three years after the discovery of a wolverine in the Tahoe National Forest north of Truckee, the elusive creature continues to roam the region, defying expectations, delighting many and stirring calls to find him a mate.

Read the whole story