Ski report: Bring out the fatties



“Hard pack” is a phrase that won’t be used for a while at Lake Tahoe ski resorts.

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

Area tourism officials contend Armstrong’s retirement no big deal

By John Schumacher, Sacramento Bee

As the superstar exits, an obvious question hangs over the Amgen Tour of California pro cycling race.

Has the event grown enough to thrive without him?



Lance

Armstrong

Lance Armstrong’s decision to retire from cycling, announced early Wednesday in an interview with the Associated Press, leaves the sixth annual race without its biggest draw.

The seven-time Tour de France winner’s presence increased crowds the past two years in Sacramento, with an estimated 75,000 turning out to watch a 2.4-mile prologue in 2009 and close to 100,000 lining city streets to view the 104.3-mile opening stage last year.

But the eight-day race, set for May 15-22, has grown in stature. It survived a move from February to May last year, when it began competing for riders with the Giro d’Italia, and it is viewed as good preparation for the Tour de France in July.

“I quite frankly think the race has gotten bigger than just one individual,” said John McCasey, executive director of the Sacramento Sports Commission. “We’re talking about the biggest name in the sport, but I think at the end of the day people will be all wrapped up in the event itself.”

The Tour of California has added Lake Tahoe for the first time, returned to a midrace trek down Highway 1 and thrown in a demanding climb up Mount Baldy in the next-to-last stage.

Stage 2 goes from Squaw Valley to the state Capitol, with the third stage starting in Auburn and finishing in Modesto.

“We would have definitely loved to have Lance here,” said Carol Chaplin, executive director of the Lake Tahoe Visitors Authority. “There is some disappointment, but there are going to be so many different aspects of the tour and tremendous athletes who are going to take the spotlight whether he’s here or not.”

Read the whole story

Ski report: One of many powder days



More white stuff is on the way.

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

Next round of storms about to arrive in Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

Any break in the weather is not going to last long in the greater Lake Tahoe area. This is because a winter storm warning is in effect from 10 this morning to 4am Saturday.

Tahoe Truckee Unified has canceled classes for Thursday. Schools in Washoe County School District are on a two-hour delay.

The National Weather Service on Thursday morning was forecasting the heaviest snow to arrive Friday night.



Fill up the gas can because the snowblower will get more action in the coming days. Photo/Kathryn Reed

Another 1 to 3 of snow could arrive at lake level, with upward of 4 feet above 7,000 feet.

Already on the South Shore 2 feet have fallen in the city limits of South Lake Tahoe as of Thursday morning.

The winds are not expected to be as intense as they were with the arrival of the last storm.

With a mild January and first half of February, ski resort operators are rejoicing about the white stuff.

Travel in the Lake Tahoe Basin and surrounding area will remain sketchy for the next few days as road surfaces are slick. Numerous spinouts were reported by law enforcement on Wednesday. Vehicles – even trucks – were stuck in berms in the middle of Highway 50 in South Tahoe because drivers think four-wheel drive means they can go anywhere.

Click on the state icons on the home page of *Lake Tahoe News* to know the current road conditions.

Rail jam benefits Heavenly Ski Foundation

The Heavenly Ski and Snowboard Foundation's Shredtacular Rail Jam event at the American Legion in South Lake Tahoe is Feb. 18 from 4:30-10pm.

Open to skiers and snowboarders of all ages, the Shredtacular will be on a feature built by Rob Giustina of On Course Events. Entry is $20 and includes a raffle ticket for a chance to win tons of prizes.

The Shredtacular Rail Jam is a fundraiser for the Heavenly Snowboard Team's trip to USASA Nationals in Copper Mountain, Colo., in April. The team expects to send 15 athletes to compete in the national event representing South Lake Tahoe.

Registration will be at the American Legion beginning at 4:30pm and is $20. Practice begins at 5pm. Divisions include male and female, skier and snowboarder, 12 and under, 13 to 17, and 18 and over. There will also be a Money Jam open to all participants for an additional $10; winner takes half the pot.

Report: California parks need more than money

By Matt Weiser, Sacramento Bee

There might be no money for state parks, but money isn’t all they need.

That is the basic message in a new study released Friday by California’s largest parks advocacy group.

The “Vision for Excellence” report by the nonprofit California State Parks Foundation is an acknowledgment that no financial salvation is at hand for the embattled parks, and that a new mission for an austere future may be needed.



Grover Hot Springs in Markleeville has had its hours reduced. Photo/LTN file

Gov. Jerry Brown has ordered the State Parks Department to cut $22 million from its operating budget over the next two years. Within two weeks, the department is expected to release a list of properties to close in the 278-park system to meet the cost-cutting target.

They would become the first total closures in the 150-year history of the state park system.

In this context, it might seem surprising that the new report offers few financial fixes. But in November, the foundation was unsuccessful in that arena when voters failed to approve Proposition 21, which would have imposed an $18 annual fee on vehicle registrations to fund park operations.

Read the whole story

Tahoe Grizzlies headed to post-season play

By Ted Parkhill

This past weekend the Tahoe Grizzlies Pee Wees (ages 11 and 12) played a double-header at home against the Cupertino Cougars. On Saturday the Grizzlies didn't know their own strength and ended up with 26 minutes of penalties.

Despite playing shorthanded for more than a third of the game, the Grizzlies dominated and won 6–2.

Reiss Jensen, No. 9 center from Reno, and Edward Parkhill, No. 7 right wing of Incline Village, had two goals each.

Janez Demsar Jr., No. 19 left wing from South Lake Tahoe, playing in his first season of organized hockey, scored his first goal of the season and his career. He was in position in the slot right where he needed to be. He buried it in the top corner of the net.

On Sunday, Tahoe set an easy pace and again it was a Grizzlies win 4-2.

Carson Bailey, No. 13 left wing from South Lake Tahoe, scored two goals and after that the Grizzlies never looked back.

With the two wins on the weekend the Grizzlies are in first place in their league and are assured of finishing with at least a third place spot in the overall standings. They still have two more regular season games – March 5 in Cupertino and

March 6 in San Jose.

The Tahoe Grizzlies Squirts (ages 9 and 10) also faced the Cupertino Cougars for a doubleheader. On Saturday they played a tough match, but ended up winning 5-3. On Sunday it was a really close game. The Cougars went ahead by one goal and in the third period the Grizzlies poured it on, but ended up losing 1-0.

It is only their second regular season loss.

Following this weekend they remain in first place in their league. They still have four more regular season games (the next two are Feb. 26-27 in Oakland and San Jose, respectively).

Both teams are headed to the NORCAL playoffs in Vacaville on March 18–20.

This weekend the Tahoe Grizzlies Pee Wees and the Squirts are headed to San Diego to participate in the 2011 California Winter Games.

Ted Parkhill is with the South Tahoe Amateur Hockey Association.

Ski report: Powder, powder, powder



Snow – it’s the word for the day.

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

The groundhog was wrong – winter hasn’t gone away

By Kathryn Reed

That all too familiar hum of winter was echoing through the Lake Tahoe Basin this morning long before the break of day. That would be the snowblower.

More than 6 inches of white stuff had fallen at lake level on the South Shore by 7am, with no sign of it stopping. Expect more with the winter storm warning in effect until 10 tonight.

Schools at the lake in Douglas County have been canceled. Classes are also canceled at Tahoe-Truckee Unified.

The National Weather Service in Reno is calling for periods of heavy snowfall today – meaning 3 inches an hour in some areas of the Sierra. Western Nevada can expect 1 to 2 inches an hour.



Sue Wood starts Feb. 16 by clearing her South Lake Tahoe driveway. Photo/Kathryn Reed

The brunt of this storm is expected to be here until 10am.

By the time it blows east, 1 to 2 feet could have fallen at the lake, with 3 to 5 feet above 7,000 feet.

Another storm is expected in the area Thursday afternoon and lingering until Friday evening.

Roads are slick and restrictions are in place. Check the state icons on the home page of *Lake Tahoe News* to find up-to-date road conditions. Visibility is so bad over Spooner Summit that some commuters turned around and took a vacation day.

These storms slated for the rest of the week are cold ones. The mercury isn't expected to hit 30 all week in Tahoe. The low tonight is forecast to be 9 degrees in South Lake Tahoe, rising to 14 as a low Friday night.

Rafting fees going up on American River

By Gus Thomson, Auburn Journal

State Parks will be asking river-rafting businesses to dig deeper into their pockets as it works to make up for Bureau of Reclamation funding cutbacks in the Auburn State Recreation Area.

Recreation Area Superintendent Mike Lynch said rafting fees on both the north and middle forks of the American River are being raised this season.

The charge to whitewater-rafting contractors on the two rivers will increase 40 percent from $5 to $7 for each raft customer that takes part in a trip.

The Auburn State Recreation Area also has jurisdiction over South Fork whitewater licensing at Coloma. Fees there will rise 50 percent to $3 from $2, Lynch said.

With bureau cutbacks and State Parks needs to make up $300,000 due to federal funding cutbacks, Lynch said the recreation area's user fee for parking will also be expanding into a new area. Plans are for parkers along the Weimar area's Ponderosa Way to start paying a $10 fee. The area covers parkland near the Ponderosa Bridge over the North Fork of the American River.

Read the whole story