Ski report: Find the groomers



Light winds are expected today, with highs in the 30s.

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

Nevada bear hunt debate rages on

By Jeff Delong, Reno Gazette-Journal

Details of the contentious plan to conduct Nevada's first black bear hunt beginning next summer are set to be finalized Friday in Las Vegas, with little sign rancorous debate over the plan is near an end.

The Nevada Board of Wildlife Commissioners, which unanimously approved a hunt Dec. 4 in Reno, is scheduled to adopt harvest numbers, season dates and other specifics.

Chris Healy, spokesman for the Nevada Department of Wildlife, said people continue to voice strong feelings about the hunt, with many opposed.

"Lots of people have made their thoughts known," Healy said. "The majority of input has been 'don't hunt the bears,' but we've also had input supporting the hunt."

As proposed, a hunt lasting from late August through late December would allow a maximum of 20 bears, no more than six of them females, to be killed. Once six females are killed, the hunt would be halted regardless if the full 20 have yet to be harvested, Healy said.

Dogs could be used in the hunt, as could any legal weapons, including rifles, shotguns and bows. Sows with cubs could not be hunted, and killing a cub would be illegal. Hunters would have to provide a skull and hide, with evidence of sex naturally attached, to the Department of Wildlife for inspection within 72 hours of killing a bear.

Bear hunting would be permitted across a swatch of western Nevada, including near Lake Tahoe and in parts of Douglas, Storey, Lyon and Mineral counties.

Read the whole story

Snow train to North Shore being talked about

By Ed Fletcher, Sacramento Bee

Over its nearly 70-year run, the Denver Ski Train helped link hundreds of thousands of city dwellers with Colorado's rich winter sport assets.

Squaw Valley USA's new president and CEO, Andy Wirth, likes the idea of offering San Francisco and Sacramento area residents a mass transit option for travel to Lake Tahoe.

So he has begun talking to operators of Northstar and other North Lake Tahoe resorts about a ski train from the Bay Area

to Truckee.

“There is great promise,” said Wirth, who five months into his new job is up to his elbows overhauling his resort.

Passenger rail would give visitors to the Sierra Nevada a viable – even entertaining – option to navigating roads, often in inhospitable weather.

For those who might not want to wait for Wirth’s idea to come to fruition, Amtrak already operates once-a-day passenger service along the I-80 corridor. The eastbound California Zephyr begins in Emeryville. Roughly 52 hours later it terminates in Chicago. Truckee is one of the stops.

Read the whole story

Despite loss in Fresno, Tahoe Grizzlies remain in first place

By Tom Parkhill

This past weekend the Tahoe Grizzlies Pee Wees (ages 11-12) were on the road to Fresno. They were set to take on the Falcons who they had previously beat 13-1 and 3-0 in their two meetings in South Lake Tahoe in November. The game on Saturday was tied, but then the Falcons prevailed by scoring three short-handed goals in a row to beat the Grizzlies 6–3.

The Grizzlies came out of hibernation on Sunday morning and managed to tie the second game 4–4. The Falcons scored another two goals short-handed).

With that extra point earned from the tie the Grizzlies are only two points away from securing a playoff berth. They remain in first place of their division based on their overall win percentage.

This weekend the Tahoe Grizzlies Pee Wees are headed to Vacaville and San Jose for two games against the Vacaville Jets and the San Jose Junior Sharks.

The undefeated Tahoe Grizzlies Squirts are also on the road in San Jose against the Junior Sharks on Saturday and on Sunday they face the Capital Thunder in Roseville.

The next home games are Feb. 12-13 at South Lake Tahoe Ice Arena (1176 Rufus Allen Blvd.). Admission is always free to all hockey fans.

Tom Parkhill is with the South Tahoe Amateur Hockey Association.

Ski report: Dress in layers



It’s going to be cold on the slopes today.

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

Banzai Tour – a test of free riding, downhill skills

By Dana Turvey

The Rahlves Banzai Tour follows a simple equation: speed plus terrain divided by fun equals just what the host still craves post-World Cup.

And Daron Rahlves is the guy to do it. He took a perfectly good career as a 12-time winning World Cup downhiller and three-time Olympian and amped it with a run on the newly formed U.S. Skier Cross Team and a fourth visit to the Olympic Games. Throw in some X Games hardware and there's quite a resume.

The three-stop Banzai Tour has morphed from its roots as the Silver Belt Banzai Race, which Rahlves re-booted in 2009 at his host resort of Sugar Bowl. A blend of ski and boarder cross strategy, big mountain free riding and downhill racing, the Banzai pumps racers four at a time out of a skicross start "maneuvering through strategically-placed gates on a big mountain course while navigating alongside fellow racers, with the limited rules to finish fast enough to advance to the next round."



Daron Rahlves brings the Banzai Tour to Kirkwood Feb.

5-6.
Photo/Dana
Turvey

“The Silver Belt event has been so much fun that I wanted to see it kind of expand and to also do something for Tahoe,” Rahlves told *Lake Tahoe News* from his home in Truckee. “This kind of series isn’t done anywhere else and I figured that it could be a draw to bring attention to Lake Tahoe in a way that’s really unique.

“So, I got together with (long-time sponsor) Red Bull and we tried to decide what other resorts would fit in. In addition to Sugar Bowl, we came up with Kirkwood and Alpine Meadows because of their terrain. With both places, it’s so wide-open and they get lots of snow, plus they have plenty of natural terrain features and impressive steeps.”

This winter’s Banzai Tour schedule had the first event at Alpine Meadows on Jan. 22-23, with the results sheet reading like a partial who’s who of winter: Errol Kerr, Shelly Robertson, Nate Holland and Chris Hernandez were part of the world class roster.

Kirkwood is coming up this weekend and the finals at Sugar Bowl will be March 12 and 13. The format is fairly simple: day one is qualifiers and after inspection and practice runs, each entrant has a solo timed run that is used for the four-person brackets the following day. The finals day will bracket the top 32 skiing men, top 32 snowboarding men and top 16 in each category for the women. Then the banzai part truly starts.

At a fairly tame entry fee of $100 per resort, that gives racers two days of lift tickets in addition to the event. There is a total purse of $50,000, which allows for $10,000 in prize money at each of the resorts, plus an extra $10,000 distributed to the overall tour winners. Math whizzes will realize that leaves a spare $10,000 that goes to the winner of

the Banzai Super Final.

Don’t look for Rahlves’ name on a check this weekend, but maybe at the very end of the series.

“I won’t be racing through the series,” Rahlves explains. “I’m more just the ambassador for the event and I’ll be there with my wife and our twins. So I’ll be there each day and I’m setting the course, forerunning and doing a lot of work behind the scenes. But I’m mostly sitting on the sidelines, licking my chops waiting for the Super Final, where I get to race against the winning skier from Alpine, Kirkwood and Sugar Bowl. Then it’s a final day, one run, winner-take-all $10,000 that should be a definite crowd pleaser.”

Speaking of crowds, spectators get more than just great racing. At each stop there’s a sponsor village with tents and a few giveaways. Rahlves has brought together an impressive list of sponsors, many onboard since his early World Cup days. Look for booths from Spyder, Bud Light, Red Bull, Contour HD, Giro, Sierra Avalanche Center, Atomic, Suunto, Snowbomb, 101.5FM, TahoeTV, Powder Magazine, Wend Snow Wax, Zinka SPF and Crux Events.

Rahlves says, “At Kirkwood, after the qualifiers, we plan to meet at the outdoor patio, the Village Plaza (at the base of chairs 5 and 6) and just have some fun. If it gets colder, then we may migrate to Bub’s Pub across the street. But at each event, we have a charity that some of the proceeds go to – again, for Kirkwood, it’s the Level Field Fund, which offers grants to athletes who may not have the funds to travel to competition. It was started by Ross Powers, and with other athletes like Michael Phelps and Seth Wescott, we’re trying to bring it some attention.”



Banzai Tour competitors at Alpine Meadows in January. Photo/Alpine Meadows

The Kirkwood course on Feb. 5-6, accessed from top of Chair 10, will run down Eagle Bowl and Rahlves guesstimates that it will be a bit more than one minute long.

“You get there from the top of the Wall, but the course won’t start until the Eagle Bowl ridge to skier’s right. Then it’s pretty wide-open, which is great because there’s lots of room to spread out and a chance to use the fall line. There will be eight or so gates and we’ll set it so you can use the terrain to naturally soak up speed or just let it go and catch some air. Plus, you don’t have to worry about anyone coming in from your right,” Rahlves said with a laugh.

Based on the popularity of the Alpine Meadows stop, Kirkwood’s entries could sell out. Register beforehand online and mark your calendar for a day of fun, speed and terrain, Daron Rahlves-style.

Ski report: Cold and sunny



Blue sky, chilly temps and a bit of wind are in the forecast for today.

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

Special ski days benefit North Shore schools

The Excellence in Education Foundation’s Skiing for Schools Days allows people on the slopes for $25 as a fundraiser for North Shore schools.

Participating resorts include: Tahoe Donner Ski Area, Feb. 28-March 6; Sugar Bowl, March 19; Homewood, March 20; Alpine Meadows, April 3; Squaw Valley, April 10.

The special lift tickets must be purchased in advance at a Porters Sports location (Truckee, Tahoe City or Incline Village), except the Homewood and Alpine events, which may be purchased at the resorts.

Familiar names dot U.S. Freestyle Team roster

By Elizabeth Karam, U.S. Ski Team

PARK CITY – World Cup leader Hannah Kearney of Norwich, Vt., reigning World Champions Patrick Deneen of Cle Elum, Wash., and Ryan St. Onge of Winter Park, Colo., as well as 2011 Winter X Games champions Sammy Carlson of Portland and John Teller of Mammoth Lakes headline the U.S. 2011 FIS Freestyle World Championship Team. The U.S. Ski and Snowboard Association announced the roster Monday.

The U.S. will be represented by a strong crew of 37 skiers looking to compete with success on the World Championship stage. The four-day event will showcase the United States' best, including Olympic medalists, World Champions and X Games winners, as well as a new event to the World Championships, slopestyle skiing. Slopestyle as well as halfpipe skiing are being considered for the inclusion in the 2014 Olympic Winter Games in Sochi, Russia.

Among the team members are 2009 World Champions St. Onge, Deneen and 2005 World Champion Kearney. The World Championships medalists also include 2009 bronze medalist Jen Hudak of Salt Lake City.

2011 FIS World Freestyle Ski Championship Team

Aerials

Men

Scotty Bahrke (Tahoe City)

Nevin Brown (Streetsboro, OH)

Matt DePeters (Hamburg, NY)

Dylan Ferguson (Amesbury, MA)

Ryan St. Onge (Winter Park, CO)

Women

Ashley Caldwell (Charleston, SC)

Emily Cook (Belmont, MA)

Dual Moguls

Men

Jeremy Cota (Carrabassett Valley, ME)

Patrick Deneen (Cle Elum, WA)

Sho Kashima (Stateline)

Bryon Wilson (Butte, MT)

Women

Hannah Kearney (Norwich, VT)

Heather McPhie (Bozeman, MT)

Eliza Outtrim (Steamboat Springs, CO)

Kayla Snyderman (Winchester, MA)

Halfpipe

Men

Simon Dumont (Dillon, CO)

Tucker Perkins (North Hampton, NH)

David Wise (Reno)

Torin Yater-Wallace (Basalt, CO)

Women

Jess Cumming (Avon, CO)

Jen Hudak (Salt Lake City)

Devin Logan (West Dover, VT)

Brita Sigourney (Carmel, CA)

Moguls

Men

Jeremy Cota (Carrabassett Valley, ME)

Patrick Deneen (Cle Elum, WA)

Joe Discoe (Telluride, CO)

David DiGravio (Farmington, ME)

Bryon Wilson (Butte, MT)

Women

Hannah Kearney (Norwich, VT)

Heidi Kloser (Vail, CO)

Heather McPhie (Bozeman, MT)

Eliza Outtrim (Steamboat Springs, CO)

Skicross

Men

Pat Duran (North Fayston, VT)

Ethan Fortney (Tenino, WA)

John Teller (Mammoth Lakes)

Trevor Ricoili (South Lake Tahoe)

Slopestyle

Men

Sammy Carlson (Portland, OR)

Alex Schlopy (Park City, UT)

John Strenio (Salt Lake City)

Gus Kenworthy (Telluride, CO)

Women

Devin Logan (West Dover, VT)

Ashley Battersby (Park City, UT)

Keri Herman (Breckenridge, CO)

Megan Olenick (Carbondale, CO)

Ski report: Pockets of powder



It’s time to get on the mountain to find those powder stashes.

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