Ski report: A break between storms



It’s likely to be one of those epic days on the slopes of Lake Tahoe. Lots of snow, lots of sun.

Read the ski report from Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe, to know what’s going on at your favorite resort.

Placerville sports announcer nominated for national award

By Mark Billingsley, Sacramento Bee

When Bill Sullivan learned he was nominated for National Media Member of the Year by the North American 360 Sprint Car Poll, his first thought was of his father, Gerry, who passed away in 2006.

Sullivan is the track announcer at Placerville Speedway and works in the press shop for Handy Racing Promotions and the San Francisco-based Golden Gate Racing Team, which is affiliated with Richard Childress Racing.

“My dad was my big influence with the whole sport because he was such a huge fan from when I was very little until his final days four years ago,” said Sullivan, who will learn in January if he won the award at the annual Chili Bowl Race in

Tulsa, Okla. “He was super busy managing the grocery store (Lucky on Broadway in Placerville), but on Saturday nights that was always our thing.”

Read the whole story

Utah man eyes record-breaking swim across Lake Tahoe

By Melinda Rogers, Salt Lake Tribune

James Jonsson grew up on the shores of Hawaii, where he fell in love with long distance swimming during ocean workouts.

When a job change brought him to Utah 17 years ago, he kept his passion for marathon swimming alive in the state’s lakes and creeks.

The 48-year-old South Jordan man’s competitive drive led him to tackle a 19-mile swim across Bear Lake last summer, when he set a new record of 8 hours 53 minutes —the fastest time known for crossing the lake’s aquamarine waters.

Now, Jonsson has his sights set on another swim: a 21-mile trek across Lake Tahoe next summer. Only 17 people have managed the feat, which is especially challenging because of Lake Tahoe’s altitude and cool waters.

This time, Jonsson wants to do the swim for charity.

He’ll be swimming the length of Lake Tahoe to promote organ donation, a cause close to his heart for two reasons.

His father received a life-saving kidney transplant in the

mid-1980s. And in 2003, he watched his 8-year-old son's organs save the lives of several people, after the boy choked to death as a result of a birth defect that created problems with his esophagus.

Read the whole story

Ski report: It's a powder day



All resorts around Lake Tahoe are reporting several inches of fresh powder. At lake level on the South Shore about 3 inches of snow fell overnight.

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

Ski wax exposes users to dangerous chemicals

By Cheryl Katz, Environmental Health News

In a cluttered workroom at the back of the Berkeley shop, technician Bobby Panighetti readies a pair of skis for their first tracks, infusing the bottoms with hot wax. This essential ritual is being performed at winter sports centers around the world as the ski season gets under way.



But new scientific research suggests that ski wax can expose users to potentially dangerous chemicals that can build up in bodies and may carry serious health risks, including cardiovascular disease, liver damage, hormone disruption and cancer.

Racers in particular use waxes with high amounts of fluorine-containing compounds, which can include substances known as perfluorochemicals. These so-called high-fluoro waxes make the skis go faster, but that speed could come at a cost – especially for parents who may layer on race wax week after week without knowing how to handle it safely.

Read the whole story

Skiers unwrap gifts at Sierra – short lines, plenty of snow

By Kathryn Reed

TWIN BRIDGES – Sometimes the best celebrations are spent with thousands of other people. Such was the case for the skiers and boarders schussing down the slopes of Sierra-at-Tahoe on Christmas.

One rider started taking her clothes off in the early afternoon at West Bowl saying how hot she was after starting the day at 9am. Another woman was in spaghetti straps. It was warm to start with, but the wind began to cool things down as the sun disappeared behind the clouds when the storm started to blow into the region.

Karina Kauffman, 13, didn’t mind the bulk of her gifts were not going to be opened until Christmas night.



Sierra-at-Tahoe employees in the Christmas spirit. Photos/Kathryn Reed

“This is the best time ever,” the Placerville teen said. Fewer people on the runs made her feel safer than a typical Saturday on the slopes.

Kauffman was on the mountain with her brother, dad and grandpa.

Tons of families spent the day at Sierra. Plenty of people were milling about the base lodge – seeming to be there to watch their loved ones enjoy the snow. Holiday tunes echoed through the sound system. Several people with Santa hats whizzed down the slopes, while at least one fully dressed Santa flew down on skis.

Plenty of snow covers all the slopes in and around Lake Tahoe. Sierra as of Christmas Day had received 71 inches in the last week and 240 inches since Thanksgiving.

Crews are still working on what will be the South Shore’s only super pipe.

With snow in the forecast for the better part of the week, powder days will be the norm.

Jaideep Neboori, 25, found a stash of powder under the West Bowl lift on Saturday. So much so that he got stuck for a bit, which meant his family kept on going.

He tries to get in a few days of boarding each season, but that’s more difficult now that he lives in New Jersey instead of Pleasanton, where he grew up.

For Tom Matteson, 28, and his buddy they thought visiting friends in South Lake Tahoe would be the best bet for the holidays. His family is spread out across the country so the Santa Barbara resident decided to make a shorter road trip.

“It’s always good to have fun on Christmas,” Matteson said.

Yun Mou and her husband brought their 4-year-old daughter to Sierra for her first time on skis. The San Jose couple has not been on skis for years, but said they were having fun. With limited time off from work, they said this time of year is when they can make it to the mountains.

Being from China, they said Christmas isn’t that big of a deal so it was just another ski day.

Many would say the best present was it being a Saturday without the usual crowds.

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First tracks at Squaw offered for $49

Dawn Patrol, Squaw Valley's newest program, allows skiers and riders to experience the mountain in an entirely new way Dec. 26-31 and weekends throughout the season.

Dawn Patrol is an exclusive early morning mountain experience that includes a five-star breakfast buffet at High Camp and exclusive access to the 200 acres of tree runs, untouched corduroy and exhilarating chutes of Shirley Lake. Dawn Patrol is $49 (non-pass holders also much purchase a lift ticket).

Meet at 7:15am in the Cable Car building. Participants will ride the 7:40am Cable Car to High Camp where they have the option to enjoy a five-star breakfast or hit the slopes starting at 8am sharp for up to an hour and a half of pre-public skiing and riding on Shirley Lake. Breakfast runs from 8am to 10am. Once the mountain opens at 9am, skiers and riders will be able to access all of Squaw Valley's 4,000 acres.

Dawn Patrol is limited to 150 people. Tickets are available for pre-purchase online at or at any ticket window prior to 3pm on the day before the Dawn Patrol date. Pending availability, tickets can also be purchased the morning-of, inside the Cable Car building. Check out the information page.

Ski report: It's going to be

a jolly day



Santa delivered his gift to the ski resorts early with plenty of snow. Today he brings sunshine with a few clouds.

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

Snow forecast for tonight, Sunday

Updated Dec. 25 at 8:12am.

Christmas Day should be low-key when it comes to the weather, but the same cannot be said for this evening.

The National Weather Service in Reno says a low pressure system will drop south from the Gulf of Alaska and quickly move across the Sierra and Western Nevada tonight. A winter weather advisory has been issued from 4pm today to 4am Sunday.

Wind, rain and snow will be part of the storm in Lake Tahoe.

Expect snow totals of 5 to 10 inches above 7,000 feet, with 4 inches at lake level. Snow levels could drop to 5,000 feet.

A break in the snow will come Monday, with the white stuff returning for Tuesday and Wednesday

– Lake Tahoe News staff report

Slopestyle, halfpipe competition at Northstar

The North Face Park and Pipe Open Series, a two-stop tour featuring ski slopestyle and halfpipe competitions, is Jan. 6-9 at Northstar-at-Tahoe in Truckee and Feb. 17-20 at Waterville Valley in New Hampshire.

The North Face Park and Pipe Open Series will dedicate one competition day to halfpipe and two days to slopestyle. Judging will be overall impression based on creativity, degree of difficulty, combinations, variations, style, and amplitude. The competition at Northstar Resort is the last event that will count toward getting an invite to the 2011 Winter X Games, and will count on the Association of Freeskiing Professionals (AFP) points list to qualify for the Halfpipe and Slopestyle FIS World Championships in February.

The North Face Park and Pipe Open Series will work in conjunction with the AFP on competition judging, with AFP General Manager and X Games competitor Steele Spence serving as head judge for the series.