Ski report: Conditions are iffy



The calendar still says fall, but it would be hard to know it based on all the winter weather in Tahoe. Unfortunately the storm is a windy one. That, combined with a mix of snow and rain on the slopes is calling for most resorts to not be completely open this morning.

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

Mancuso 8th in downhill; Vonn on the podium

By Elizabeth Karam, U.S. Ski Team

VAL d'ISERE, France – Olympic gold medalist Lindsey Vonn of Vail captured a stunning victory Saturday to regain the Audi FIS Alpine World Cup downhill standings lead as German Maria Riesch finished 24th. Teammate Julia Mancuso of Squaw Valley was 8th with five Americans finishing inside the top 30.

"I'm really psyched to have the red bib back. It means a lot," said Vonn, who won the 2009 downhill World Championship on the nearby Solaise slope in Val d'Isere. "I hope that I can keep skiing well and hang onto the bib until the end of the year. Downhill is my favorite event."

Vonn and Mancuso, debuting personally designed Spyder speed suits, kicked out of the start under bluebird skies and with

single digit temperatures as the field's covered faces dropped into their tucks for the Audi FIS Alpine World Cup downhill.

Vonn started 20th, making an incredible save after nearly crashing on the turn just below the second jump. She kept her cool, arriving in the finish arena with a time of 1:51.42 – 0.68 ahead of the field. Switzerland's Nadja Kamer finished in second with teammate Lara Gut in a close third.

Saturday's result marked Vonn's 35th World Cup win, the most of any American, as she regained the downhill standings lead.

After a few deep breaths in the gate, Mancuso charged the course crossing the line in eighth after Friday's super G was canceled when three feet of snow fell over the French resort. This was her fifth consecutive World Cup top 10.

"They did a good job pushing out all the snow, but it was pretty soft still. I just a lost a little time in the middle but it was another solid downhill finish," said Mancuso. "Skiing's going well, I definitely want to go a little faster but it's a good solid finish."

Americans Leanne Smith (Conway, N.H.) in 18th, Laurenne Ross (Klamath Falls, Ore.) in 25th and Alice McKennis in 30th (Glenwood Springs, Colo.) all followed suit, breaking inside the top 30 to score World Cup downhill points.

The women will be back in the start gate Sunday in Val d'Isere for a super combined.

Official results, Audi FIS Alpine World Cup, Val d'Isere, France, Downhill

1. Lindsey Vonn, Vail, CO, 1:51.42

2. Nadja Kamer, Switzerland, 1:52.10

3. Lara Gut, Switzerland, 1:52.22

4. Elisabeth Goergl, Austria, 1:52.38

5. Ingrid Jacquemod, France, 1:52.61

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8. Julia Mancuso, Squaw Valley, CA, 1:52.99

18. Leanne Smith, Conway, NH, 1:53.44

25. Laurenne Ross, Klamath Falls, OR, 1:53.68

30. Alice McKennis, Glenwood Springs, CO, 1:53.96

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35. Chelsea Marshall, Pittsfield, VT, 1:54.31

40. Stacey Cook, Mammoth, CA, 1:54.74

47. Megan McJames, Park City, UT, 1:56.10

Tamarack Lodge opens today at Heavenly Mountain Resort

By Kathryn Reed

Something dramatically different is in store for skiers at Heavenly Mountain Resort today – the first new lodge in 30 years at the South Shore resort is open.

With 40-foot windows giving expansive views to the slopes and an interior that barely feels like you've left the woods, the multi-million dollar Tamarack Lodge is ready for hungry skiers.

Inside the 9,150 Bar are round wooden tables made from trees that had been removed a few years ago when the Olympic lift was reconfigured. The resort kept the trees on site just in case they'd have a future use.



The 9,150 Bar at the Tamarack Lodge has tables made from trees cut at the resort. Photo/Provided

Blaise Carrig, co-president of Vail Resorts Mountain Division and one-time COO at Heavenly, said he got the idea for the tables from having seen a similar design at the Manzanita restaurant at the Ritz-Carlton at Northstar.

Sixteen of those tables are scattered about the bar – which got its name from the elevation of where it sits.

The lodge's name is from the six-pack chairlift – Tamarack – that is just steps from the lodge.

With the moisture lasting into early summer, the lodge was almost scrapped this building season. But the builder – SMC Contractors – convinced resort officials it could have everything done by February. Clearly, they finished well ahead of schedule.

"Heavenly gave us the resources we needed to work at an

accelerated schedule," Joe Stewart with SMC told *Lake Tahoe News*. This included providing snowcats and snowmobiles for workers to get to the job site once the snow started to fall.

Stewart also credits the planning of the project for his crews to be able to do their job.



Lots of seating and natural light at the new lodge. Photo/Provided

He is extremely complimentary of Carrig's interior design savvy. And Carrig returns the compliment to Stewart and his team.

Carrig has an eye for such endeavors, having designed two of his houses – inside and outside. He did some substantial design work for previous employers at Sugar Bush and the Canyons.

"Back in the day when I was a ski patrol director, in the summertime I had a small building business," Carrig told *Lake Tahoe News*. "At that time we specialized in old Vermont architecture style, like old farm houses."

Part of what he wanted for the Tamarack Lodge was for it to have a comfortable lodge feel even though the windows are high and the room wide-open.

With painting the sheet rock red and then putting Douglas fir planks horizontally on the wall with 2-inch gaps in between so the red shows through, it gives the room some depth. Plus, the black bolts give it a more of rustic feel.



The Tamarack Lodge from the slopes of Heavenly. Photo/Kathryn Reed

“Large chandeliers also anchor the ceiling and make the room feel smaller than it is,” Carrig said.

Carrig’s fingerprints are all over the lodge. He was working hand-in-hand with the architect – right down to the bar tops, bar features and tile for the bathrooms.

For the oversized restrooms with numerous stalls Carrig selected large square natural curry tiles.

This lodge near the top of the gondola finally gives skiers a place to escape the elements – which for this weekend will be a welcome change if the forecast holds.

Five themed food stations are available, with 500 indoor seats and 250 outdoor.

Heavenly’s master plan calls for two more lodges – Powder Bowl and Sand Dunes. Construction dates have not been set for either one. East Peak Lodge is the last dining facility to

open at Heavenly – that was 1970.

“The company is really proud of this,” Carrig said of Tamarak the day before it officially opened. “Heavenly definitely needed to have a really comfortable lodge.”

Santa photos at Heavenly benefit foundation

In cooperation with the Heavenly Sharp Shooters and Heavenly Mountain, the Heavenly Ski and Snowboard Foundation will host Photos with Santa on Heavenly Mountain Dec. 18–24 from 9:30am to 2:30pm (weather permitting).

Santa will begin his day at Gunbarrel Express and make his way over to the top of the Gondola where he will be from noon to 1pm. Catch him at Ridge Run at 10am and 1:30pm.

The Santa photo package is $25 and includes four photos, one 6×8, one 4×6 and two 2×3; for an additional $10 you can purchase a snowflake ornament two-sided photo frame. Photos will be available for same-day pick-up at the base of the gondola or in the California Lodge Cafeteria at 3pm.

USFS needs volunteers to work

with kids outdoors

The U.S. Forest Service Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit is looking for volunteers to assist with the Winter Trek Express environmental education program for fifth-graders beginning Jan. 10 through March 31.



This three-hour environmental education program takes place at 9,000 feet at Heavenly Mountain Resort.

U.S. Forest Service rangers lead the class through the wilderness to learn snowshoe skills and discover winter adapting animals.

This is an opportunity for individuals who wish to gain experience in the environmental education field and have a strong desire to work outdoors and give back to their community. The ideal applicant should have experience working with children, good communication skills, an outgoing friendly personality and the ability to commit to a minimum of one day a week for 12 weeks. The Forest Service will provide a uniform, training, and snowshoes if needed. Volunteers should provide winterized boots.

Prospective volunteers should submit their resume electronically. To learn more, contact Megan Johnson at (530) 543.2694.

Tahoe City's Daniels on podium in slalom

By U.S. Ski Team

PANORAMA, British Columbia – Mikaela Shiffrin of Vail led a string of five U.S. podiums in the final NorAm races in Panorama on Thursday. Anna Marno of Steamboat Springs and Kiley Staples of Park City were second and third in the women's giant slalom, while Colby Granstrom of Lake Stevens, Wash., and Nick Daniels of Tahoe City were second and third in the men's slalom.

In the men's slalom race, Norway's Jonathan Nordbotten was the fastest to cross the finish line in 1:37.33.

The NorAm series will move to Sunday River, Maine, for men's giant slalom and slalom races and to Val St. Come for two women's slalom events Jan. 3-4.

Ski report: Snow, snow, and more snow



The storm has arrived and is going to become more intense as the day goes on. It's possibly going to be one long powder day.

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

Several feet of snow in forecast for Lake Tahoe

Updated: Dec. 17 at 8:10am.

By Kathryn Reed

Snow – it's going to be the forecast for at least the next three days.

Slick conditions caused a single-vehicle rollover accident on Highway 50 at Glenbrook on Friday morning. No one was injured in the Ford Expedition with California plates, according to the Nevada Highway Patrol.

Commuters over Spooner Summit into Carson City on Dec. 17 report visibility being sketchy at times and slick roads.

The National Weather Service in Reno has issued a winter storm warning from noon today to 4pm Sunday.



Sunsets like this one at Cave Rock on Dec. 16 may not happen for a few days based on the

forecast.
Photo/Kathryn
Reed

Rain and snow are expected to be part of the mix at lake level, which has prompted flooding concerns. The ground is already saturated, prompting sump pumps to come on in high water table areas like the Tahoe Keys and Tahoe Island on the South Shore. These pumps usually aren't triggered until the spring run-off.

One to 2 feet of white stuff is being called for at the lake, while elevations above 7,000 feet could see 3 to 6 feet by the time the system leaves the region.

As seems to be the norm, wind will be part of the storm. Gusts could hit 70mph at lower elevations, with ridges being whipped at 100mph.

Roads in and around the Lake Tahoe Basin are likely to be a mess and have restrictions. Check out the road conditions via the state icons on *Lake Tahoe News'* home page.

When traveling in the mountains it's always a good idea to carry a shovel, flashlight, water, food, blankets and warm clothing.

At home, be sure the cupboards are stocked, flashlights work and candles are at the ready.

Tahoe athletes well

represented on U.S. snowboardcross team

By Elizabeth Karam, U.S. Snowboarding

TELLURIDE, Colo. – The 2011 U.S. Snowboarding Snowboardcross Team was announced Thursday during the Visa U.S. Snowboardcross Cup at Telluride. Spearheading the 15 riders named to the Team are nine Olympians including two-time Olympic champion Seth Wescott of Maine, Olympic silver medalist Lindsey Jacobellis of Vermont and six-time snowboardcross Winter X Games gold medalist Nate Holland of Squaw Valley.

With nine returning Olympians, the U.S. Snowboarding SBX Team is stacked for the 2011 season. Joining the crew are several up-and-coming riders with lofty goals, helping push and motivate the veterans as they head into a World Championship year with the FIS World Snowboard Championships to be held in La Molina, Spain this January.

Wescott is coming into 2011 hot, having successfully defended his 2006 Olympic gold medal, while Holland looks to make it six straight in SBX at the Winter X Games in Jan. 27-30 in Aspen. Jacobellis, who clinched two World Cup wins last season, looks to continue the World Cup momentum kicking off the seasons strong in Telluride as well as adding on another "W" to her resume at the X Games.

Other returning riders include action sports legend Shaun Palmer of South Lake Tahoe, halfpipe gold medalist Ross Powers of Vermont and up-and-comers including World Junior runner-up Faye Gulini (Salt Lake City), 2010 NorAm powerhouse JJ Tomlinson (Park City) and Brooke Shaw (Litchfield, Conn.), who is making her comeback debut from a sidelining injury suffered in Telluride last year.

With the 2011 season officially under way, the team is ahead of the curve in terms of training. While Holland was winning the World Cup opener a week ago, other Team members were at a final tune-up camp in Telluride. SBX is a tough sport, forcing the athletes to push the limits on and off the snow. They'll be looking to charge all stops on the World Cup tour especially during the Visa U.S. Snowboardcross Cup this week at Telluride – the lone World Cup on U.S. snow. The Team will be back in the USA Feb. 9-12 for the Sprint U.S. Snowboarding Grand Prix at Canyons in Park City, UT.

2011 U.S. Snowboarding Snowboardcross Roster

A Team

Nick Baumgartner, Iron River, MI

Nate Holland, Squaw Valley, CA

Lindsey Jacobellis, Stratton Mountain, VT

Graham Watanabe, Sun Valley, ID

Seth Wescott, Sugarloaf, ME

B Team

Jonathon Cheever, Saugus, MA

Callan Chythlook-Sifsof, Girwood, AK

Alex Deibold, Manchester Center, VT

Faye Gulini, Salt Lake City

Jayson Hale, Sierraville, CA

Pat Holland, Squaw Valley, CA

Shaun Palmer, South Lake Tahoe

Ross Powers, Stratton Mountain, VT

Brooke Shaw, Litchfield, CT

J.J. Tomlinson, Park City, UT

Ski report: Calm before the storm



Drop everything – it's time to ski. The sun is out in Lake Tahoe. That last sentence may not be written again for a few days.

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