

Lake Tahoe ski report, Feb. 3



It's cloudy in Lake Tahoe this morning. A little snow fell at lake level and more measurable amounts fell on the slopes overnight. Read the ski report for details. It's brought to you by Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.

Women's Winter Day Tour

Women's Winter Day Tour at Hope Valley Outdoors is Feb. 6.

It's a chance to celebrate women, winter and chocolate. It's also a fundraiser to fight domestic violence.

Times:

10am registration at the yurt

10:30am mini lesson

11:00am demo different equipment

1pm main tour event.

Cost is \$25, with \$15 going directly to South Lake Tahoe Women's Center. Cash or checks only.

Hope Valley Outdoors is at the junction of highways 88 and 89, south of South Lake Tahoe.

Bear hunting clinic in El Dorado County

A bear hunting clinic is being offered by California Department of Fish & Game on Feb. 13 in Diamond Springs, which is south of South Lake Tahoe.

The \$45 class is from 9am-4pm.

[Click here to register.](#)

Lake Tahoe ski report, Feb. 2



Punxsutawney Phil saw his shadow – six more weeks of winter. Here is the ski report from Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.

Steep, slick runs test non-Olympian's prowess

By Susan Wood

WHISTLER, British Columbia – Standing at the gate in a crouched position with my skis together, I heard the beeping of the warning clock signaling the start of my Olympic run.

The sound was in my head, no medals were at stake, but the run

is the same one the Olympians will conquer this month.



Susan Wood
dreams of
gold.
Photos/Kathryn
Reed

I was taken aback with the adrenaline rush as I launched off one of the many Whistler rollers on the Dave Murray Downhill run, the men's official 3.1km course for the 2010 Winter Games starting in 10 days. The men's and women's downhill runs, along with the super G and giant slalom courses on the lower ends, will be at Whistler Blackcomb Ski Resort's Creekside area.

The run was named after local skier Dave Murray, who as a member of the "Crazy Canucks" was ranked third in the world in downhill racing in 1979. The following year, he placed 10th in the Olympic Games at Lake Placid, N.Y., before retiring two years later to run his home resort's ski school.

His 22-year-old daughter, Julia, will follow in her father's footsteps by competing in the women's skiercross during this year's Winter Games. She was almost 2 years old when he died of cancer in 1990.

"He's our resident hero," Whistler mountain host Evelyn Coggins told her tour group at the start of the downhill run.

The run was named in his honor two decades ago. A sign is near the top explaining who Murray was and a bit about how fast the

Olympians are likely to fly down the route.

As Whistler realizes its 50-year dream to host the Winter Olympics, Murray's spirit lives on to grace the nerves of steel in the likes of Lake Tahoe's downhiller Marco Sullivan and U.S. veteran racer Bode Miller, among others.

As my Atomics scratched and scraped across the hard-packed slope on my recent visit to Whistler to preview the venues, I heard another sound. It was the voice of Tahoe orthopedic surgeon Terry Orr, who is headed north to support the athletes of the U.S. Ski Team for the third time.

"It's a windy course, and fast – not one you can just look at from top to bottom," he warned, with a wink and a nod of good luck to Sullivan.

I discovered firsthand it's steep – like much of Whistler's "great-to-be-alive-if-you-love-to-ski" runs. The drops are certainly memorable. If I had a mirror attached to my ski helmet, my look of intensity may have scared me, but I was told later I was giddy as a child.

I thrive on the steeps, so I felt right at home in the terrain known for the longest elevation drop in North America – more than 5,000 feet. Only Zermatt's 8-mile run in Switzerland beats it.

The various pitches of the Dave Murray Downhill have names like the Weasel, Afterburner – which is more like a ledge, Lower Insanity, the recently widened Coaches Corner, the short Boyd's Bump, Murray's Jump aka Hot Air, and the infamous Toilet Bowl – where an abrupt rolling hill goes into a steep pitch in which racers will need to make a 90-degree left turn off what looks like a 45-degree drop.

Coggins' group stood staring at the run at the base of the turn in awe.

“How can they do that?” I heard a few times.

I can’t wait to watch the Olympians pull it off while sitting in the comfort of my living room.

Coggins, a Halifax, Nova Scotia, native who labels what some call icy surfaces as “hard pack,” said the Toilet Bowl got its name because that’s where all the “crud collects because, yes, it rolls down hill.”

Whistler Blackcomb kept the Dave Murray Downhill and the women’s downhill – located on Franz’s run – open to the public until Jan. 25. Lower Dave Murray, even when groomed, remains a black run.

The BC trip was complete after whizzing down the two courses as if my last name were Mancuso and Sullivan of Squaw or Vonn of Vail. Well, it wasn’t exactly at Olympic speed.

“People have been so excited. There is a buzz. Now you can sit and watch at home and say ‘I skied that’,” Coggins said on the tour. “It’s amazing the speeds they go.”

Think of a finely-tuned Porsche, and now throttle it.

Much of Coggins’ focus of her tour involved doing different variations of the men’s downhill run, which can be accessed via the Garbanzo Express chairlift or the Whistler Village Gondola to the mid-station. Skiers and boarders from the Creekside area may take the Creekside Gondola to the Big Red Express to Upper Whiskey Jack, a run named after a colorful and resourceful scavenger bird that hangs out at the lodges.

The women’s downhill starts along the fall line of the Franz’s chairlift. It’s named after Franz Wilhelmsen, one of the founders of Garibaldi Lift Company and Whistler Mountain. Fast and furious is how best to describe skiing the women’s downhill, which as Coggins put it, comes with its own set of technical challenges.

Lindsey Vonn's no-guts, no-glory style and Julia Mancuso's grace-under-pressure demeanor may thrive in this setting. The run is steep and the terrain fast. The best set of edges may prompt some skiers to slide.

With an average of 2 million skier visits under its belt, Whistler's record-setting 30-plus feet of snow this season bodes well for the host of this world event designed for spectator and participant. At least 90 percent of the dual-mountain terrain will be open for riders throughout the Olympics.

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Snowsports Days at Sierra

Sierra-at-Tahoe offers Snowsports Day discounts. Tickets are discounted at just \$35 (regular rate \$69) for a full-day lift ticket for Sierra-at-Tahoe. Tickets are only valid during Snowsports Week Feb. 8-11.

Lift tickets must be purchased in advance. Tickets will not be available at Sierra-at-Tahoe.

Sales Locations: 7-Eleven on Kingsbury Grade; Nestle Toll House Cafe; Powder House at Heavenly Gondola and Pioneer Trail; Sports LTD in the Village Center; Rainbow Mountain Sports; CVS/Longs at Bijou and the Y; Super 8 Motel; Lake Tahoe Community College Bookstore; Barton Hospital Foundation; Raley's at the Y; Lira's Market; Tahoe Paradise Chevron; and Sunrise Ski & Snowboard.

For more informati0n, call (530) 543.5909 or click on Snowsports.

Lake Tahoe ski report, Feb. 1



Ski today because snow is likely to return to the Lake Tahoe area later this week. Here is the ski report from Curtis Fong, the Guy from Tahoe.

Jamaican's Tahoe training may be Olympic answer



Publisher's note: *Errol Kerr trains at Alpine Meadows.*

By Tom Lowrey, Sydney Morning Herald

The sight of a Jamaican skier on the podium at the Vancouver Winter Olympics might seem like a dubious sequel to an old Disney movie, but Jamaican ski cross racer Errol Kerr plans on making it a reality.

It has been 22 years since Jamaica first sent its infamous bobsleigh team to the Calgary Winter Olympics, but that was far from the last word from the world's most unlikely winter sport contenders.

[Read the whole story](#)

Concessionaire to provide year-round access to Tahoe

By Kathryn Reed

A nonprofit group has secured a contract for up to 10 years to be the concessionaire at Patton Landing in Carnelian Bay.

The year-round operation means free access to Lake Tahoe for non-motorized watercraft, a small sledding hill, plowed access to parking, and food vendors who will all have a connection to Tahoe.

“We’re keeping it as much Tahoe as we can,” Phil Caterino, executive director of Alpengroup, told *Lake Tahoe News*. “It will also be opened as a place for community groups to do fund raisers.”



Patton Beach,
Carnelian Bay

Alpen Sierra Coffee, Tahoe House Bakery and Tahoe Candles are some of the businesses involved in Blue Warrior Café, which is slated to open in March at the site. The year-round facility will have hot drinks, food and environmental information.

The agreement with Alpengroup was approved by the California

Tahoe Conservancy board on Jan. 29.

The state agency acquired 7.1 acres in Carnelian Bay between 1986-92 to give the public access to the lake. In 1999, \$1.8 million in improvements to the 2.2-acre Patton Landing site were completed â€” including 21 parking spaces, picnic facilities, rest rooms, patio, 723-square-foot structure and interpretive panels.

The problem has been finding a concessionaire who lives up to the full agreement. Alpengroup has been the interim concessionaire.

The agreement that was approved last month is estimated to save the CTC \$40,000 a year in utilities and maintenance.

â€œIf we break even and cover our overhead, we have met our mission,â€ Caterino told the board.

The beach, located between Kings Beach and Tahoe City, is rocky. Caterino said heâ€™s been surprised by how many people have been using the area this winter. But he said with the lot being paved, it draws people in.

â€œA lot of people are excited,â€ Caterino said of the fact the area will be open year-round with free access to the lake. Lack of parking for kayakers is a huge issue at Lake Tahoe, as is public access to the water.

His group sees this as an environmental and a business opportunity.

Part of Alpengroupâ€™s mission statement is, â€œTo build private and public partnerships to solve immediate problems with inventive and decisive intervention while recognizing that only long term constructive planning and restoration will provide sustainable solutions for the future.â€

Caterino said an underwater Webcam will be set up. Relationships with local lodging establishments are being

worked on for kayakers-canoeists who want to paddle for more than a day or who want to use Patton Landing as a multi-day staging area.

The Lake Tahoe Water Trail Committee, which the CTC is part of, wants to create a lodge-to-lodge network for people who want to circumnavigate the 72 miles of Lake Tahoe.

For more information about Alpengroup, [click here](#).

Anderson 2nd in X Games slopestyle

Sierra-at-Tahoe's Jamie Anderson brings home bronze in slopestyle at the Winter X Games in Aspen on Jan. 31.

For the results, [click here](#).