

Winter storms unearthing gold in California

By Joe Vazquez, KPIX-TV

Weeks of rainy weather across Northern California and the storm runoff through the hills of gold country have triggered a new gold rush.

“Miner Gary” Thomas said he always finds at least a little gold here on his property near Jamestown in Tuolumne County, but this year, there’s so much more runoff than normal and it’s shaking the gold from these hills.

Thomas said it could provide a “Eureka” moment for those inclined to come up here and look for it. “(The runoff) kind of ‘etch-a-sketches’ everything,” said Thomas. “Everything I had dug up and now my dig spots are all gone.”

[Read the whole story](#)

Sports betting looking a lot more like Wall Street

By Shelly Hagan, Bloomberg

Your March Madness office pool is like the Charles Schwab of sports betting. Beyond those hastily chosen brackets, there’s an entire cottage industry of sports betting that’s increasingly resembling Wall Street.

In 2016, total sports wagers in Nevada were \$4.5 billion,

according to the Nevada Gaming Control Board.

With that much at stake, gamblers are turning to more sophisticated tools that involve complex data analysis to achieve better odds, real-time wagering during games, fund managers who pool bets and risk management practices.

The result is something akin to day trading.

Read the whole story

Icemen reach playoffs; first round at SLT arena

Tahoe Icemen, a Western States Hockey League Tier II ice hockey team out of South Lake Tahoe, will be playing in the playoffs starting March 16.

It is a best out of three series beginning Thursday at 5pm at the South Lake Tahoe Ice Arena. The second game will be Friday at 5pm. If need be, the deciding game would be Saturday at 8pm.

Cost is \$6.

The team is coached by former professional ice hockey player and Reno native Mickey Lang. This is the first time under his leadership that the team has made it to post-season competition.

The Icemen will be facing the Vancouver Rangers. The winner of this series will advance to the second round of playoffs.

Sierra extends season, sets appreciation day

Sierra-at-Tahoe is extending its season through April 23.

Sierra will honor guests with Customer Appreciation Day on April 24. Customer Appreciation Day is dedicated to reminiscing about the plentiful powder days with high fives in celebration of another awesome season.

Skiers and riders of all ages can purchase a lift ticket for only \$35 on April 24. Lift ticket proceeds that day will benefit youth recreation and education including baseball, soccer, swimming and other youth activities in South Lake Tahoe.

Sierra-at-Tahoe will operate a limited number of lifts from 10am-2pm, including Grandview Express and Easy Rider Express. All guests are invited to join General Manager John Rice and the rest of Sierra's team for the official "last run of the season" from the top of Grandview Express beginning at 2pm. Last call at the Sierra Pub will be 2:45pm, in time for the ending of all winter operations at 3pm.

Nevada dam in race against Sierra snowmelt

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

The view from Lahontan dam looking west features a shimmering desert lake framed in the distance by the snowy Sierra Nevada.

The warm, late winter sun above and low roar of water surging through the dam below makes the quiet deck of the 102-year-old structure seem like a nice place for a hammock and an afternoon nap.

But there's no time to rest for Mark Solinsky or anyone else responsible for operating the dam and downstream infrastructure.

That's because they're in a race to prevent snowmelt from the glimmering Sierra Nevada from topping spillways at the rim of the desert reservoir.

Read the whole story

March Madness raises sports betting issues

By Richard N. Velotta, Las Vegas Review-Journal

March Madness is upon us, another time of the year when people who almost never set foot inside a race and sports book become sports experts and serious gamblers.

It was only a month ago that twice-a-year bettors showed their expertise on Super Bowl Sunday.

How significant is March Madness? It's big enough that both proponents and opponents of gambling point to it as an important symbol of their respective causes.

Read the whole story

Why everyone should take an avalanche course

By Abbie Barronian, Powder

I recently spent a weekend with 20 strangers in a classroom and on a couple slow, icy tours, clocking about five minutes of cruddy downhill skiing in the back country around Stevens Pass, Wash.

The AIARE Level One course is a pretty incredible way to spend a weekend.

Deciding to take an avalanche course can be tough for a lot of reasons. It's a sacrifice of precious free time, and it can be tough for folks working typical ski town jobs—waiting tables, bumping lifts, bartending—to get two and a half days off, period. It's a big expense, as much as some season passes.

For skiers new to the back country, it can be intimidating.

The thing is, anyone traveling in the backcountry should take an Avy 1. No matter your experience level, everyone—from avalanche safety professionals to casual snowshoers—can learn life-saving skills and science from the weekend-long intensive course.

Read the whole story

How Vail Resorts conquered the ski industry

By Josh Dean, Men's Journal

Since it was installed in 2010, the “orange bubble” chairlift at The Canyons in Utah has become the resort’s most iconic feature. The high-speed quad, which whisks skiers 8,700 feet to the summit of Lookout Peak in just nine minutes, was the first in North America to have heated seats and a plastic shield – the bubble – to protect riders from frigid air and snow along the way. It’s just like a gondola, but you don’t have to take off your skis. Any skier would love it.

But Robert Katz is not any skier. He’s the CEO of Vail Resorts, the \$1.4 billion resort powerhouse that owns The Canyons. Vail bought the resort in 2013, and then – through a mix of luck, lawyers, and shrewd business – snatched up neighboring Park City Mountain Resort in 2014, merging the two into a single mega-resort now known as Park City.

Vail now owns 14 resorts, which have a total of 305 lifts, and Katz thinks long and hard about all the little things that go into making the properties successful – check-in times at the ski school, why this lift line is a minute longer than that one.

Read the whole story

Squaw crowd cheers Shiffrin onto victory



Mikaela Shiffrin reacts after completing her second slalom race. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

By Susan Wood

OLYMPIC VALLEY – Steeped in tradition and prestige, the women's World Cup at Squaw Valley delivered a grand, heated environment for thousands of festive fans who turned out Saturday to see on-fire American ski racer Mikaela Shiffrin on top of the podium.

The season wraps up in Aspen next weekend, where Shiffrin is expected to clinch the World Cup title. She has 1,523 points,

with Ilka Stuhec of Slovenia having 1,145 points. Stuhec was originally scheduled to race March 11 but did not. On Friday Stuhec crashed on her first run in the giant slalom.



Elisabeth Kappaurer of Austria competes in the slalom race March 11 at Squaw. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

If Shiffrin wins the World Cup title, she would join Americans Lindsey Vonn, Bode Miller, Tamara McKinney, and Phil Mahre.

The second day of competitive ski racing at Squaw ended with a fourth overall slalom title in five years for Shiffrin – quite a prelude to celebrating her 22nd birthday Monday.



Fans have massive cow bells on Saturday to make noise to root on the athletes. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

After raising her skis and getting high-fives from friends at the finish, a red-faced Shiffrin panted and shook her head as *Lake Tahoe News* asked what she thought of the course, which is considered the toughest on the race tour this year.

"Woo," Shiffrin yelled out after realizing she won.

The Colorado skier's second run of the day capped the weekendlong races that resulted in a cliffhanger at the finish, with Shiffrin's second-to-last run and Swiss racer Wendy Holdener missing a gate near the finish. In the first run on March 11, Holdener was 0.02 seconds ahead of Shiffrin.



Bernadette Schild of Austria celebrates her third place finish on Saturday. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

As Shiffrin walked from the staging area, spectators chanted: "Mikaela, Mikaela, Mikaela."

On a spring-like, sunny day that had many spectators stripping down to one layer or less, many cowbell-toting, costume-clad enthusiasts – and their dogs – lined the sidelines to see the big-time spectacle set on the Red Dog course – the same setting as the 1960 Winter Olympic Games.



Thousands of people cheer on the racers March 11. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

The 38-degree slope proved challenging for the competitors, with only 38 of 57 finishing the slalom course in the first run, in which Shiffrin shined with a time of 47.46 seconds.

Shiffrin also won the giant slalom Friday. GS is known for more sweeping slope carving, which resembles downhill racing, while slalom is more characteristic of sharper turns.



Mikaela Shiffrin reacts to Wendy Holdener of Switzerland falling at the third to last gate after being in the lead. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

Shiffrin said she had a tough time near the top of her second slalom run.

"I don't think I found a rhythm. I was fighting to stay in it the whole time," she said.

Still, the racing phenom pulled it off – winning back-to-back disciplines on the same weekend.

The last time the granddaddy of all ski events graced Squaw was in 1969.



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On the podium Saturday were from left Sarka Strachova from Czech Republic (second), Mikael Shiffrin of Colorado (first), and Bernadette Schild of Austria (second). Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

The World Cup was an up and down emotional roller coaster for the competitors and their fans as the balmy weather conditions created a slushy surface that had the slipper volunteers cleaning the course after each skier.

By the second run it was so slushy the snow splashed some of the competitors' goggles.

When some racers fell, the crowd bellowed a loud moan in unison. When others crossed the finish line or when announcer Olympic freestyle champion Jonny Moseley called out an American competitor, the crowd erupted.



Squaw last hosted a World Cup in 1969. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

“I was bummed. I just hooked the gate,” American Resi Stiegler from Jackson Hole, Wyo., told *Lake Tahoe News* at the bottom of the course. “I love this hill.”

People crowded around racer Erin Mielzynski of Canada asking for her autograph. She fell on her run as well, but continued to smile as she signed helmets, shirts and posters.



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Lena Duerr from Germany is dejected after not being able to complete the first run. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

“It’s pretty cool to be here with the fans and being in North America,” she said.

This is precisely why Squaw Valley chief Andy Wirth said he wanted to bring World Cup back to the Lake Tahoe-area resort. Having it here was like a gift, especially for the youth who grace Squaw slopes.

Wirth told *LTN* he was pleased that everything was going as planned, minus a less than favorable forecast that earlier had predicted rain for Saturday.



Fans show their support for their respective countries. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

“That would have been daunting,” Wirth said.

As it was, a lot of effort among 2,500 paid staffers and volunteers went into the event. At the Red Dog chairlift, one could tell crews had to dig out about 10 feet.



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Megan McJames of Park City missed a gate on the first run.
Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

Shiffrin commended crews, noting in a post-race press conference that workers did an “incredible” job.

“I’ve never seen so much snow in my life,” she told *LTN*. “I imagine people here are sick of it.”

She equated the drive up to Squaw as a trip “back into history” in which old photos highlight walls of snow.



Sarka Strachova of Czech Republic finishes second on March 11 in slalom. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

The racing sensation also said she respects the history associated with meeting the likes of American legend Tamara McKinney, a former World Cup alpine ski racer from Squaw Valley who won four World Cup season titles, and still lives and works in the area.

Shiffrin called her “a great inspiration,” and added she hoped to carry on the torch in the same way to the youth of today.

Bringing on a new generation

Jake Keil, 10, of Incline Village couldn't be happier at the prospect of witnessing such a monumental event. He hiked up the snowy hill to find a place along the course ropes on crutches. The youngster competes on the Squaw team. He hurt his knee a year ago at Mount Rose and is trying to recover.



Bernadette Shild of Austria screams to third place in the slalom. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

“We wouldn’t miss this,” his father, Kirk Keil, said with a beaming smile.

“Got your bell, right?” Keil said, turning to his son.

The father-son duo showed up to watch Shiffrin and Lila Lapanja because “she’s from Incline,” the patriarch said.

The crowd erupted when Shiffrin launched out of the gate.



Resi Stiegler of Wyoming crashes March 11 on the slalom course. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

“She should be extra careful (with these conditions),” Keil said.

“That was so fast,” the young Keil said, looking up at his father.

Eleven members and two coaches with the Mammoth Ski Team came up to witness their first World Cup event.

“It’s awesome that it’s so close to home – especially since we raced the same hill,” Kendall Lach, 15, said. The California ski team was pulling for Shiffrin, the star of the weekend.

The Colorado skier comes across as a natural who at age 7 won her first slalom event.

Her success was something notably expected by her agent Killian Albrecht, an Austrian racing legend in his own right.

Albrecht, who started representing Shiffrin at age 15, told LTN the course can be tricky. And it was.

That didn’t spoil the spirits of all who enjoyed the festivity-filled weekend.

“Anytime I get to see the best in the world, I try to do it,” said Berkeley resident Andy Bennett, who bought a VIP package that qualified him for early-morning first tracks. Bennett, who has a house in Tahoe City, often skis at Alpine Meadows, but loved Squaw.

There’s something about Squaw.



Slippers make sure the course is smooth as it can be between racers. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

Coming in third in the slalom event, Bernadette Schild of Austria told the press she relished returning to a place where she has quite a connection. Her family is close to the Poulsens. Wayne and Sandy Poulsen were founders of the ski resort.

“It’s like coming home. I spent so many summers here,” Schild said, adding she appreciated the warm American welcome.

“The American crowd is amazing. They knew our names. I never heard anyone thank me in Europe for giving me a show like they did here,” she said.

Anderson takes second at X Games Norway

By USSA

HAFJELL, Norway – The American snowboard slopestyle women earned two of three podium spots at X Games Norway on Friday, with Jamie Anderson (Meyers) earning silver and Jules Marino (Westport, Conn.) taking bronze.

Anderson remains podium perfect in X Games slopestyle, earning her 13th medal in 13 starts over the last 11 years. The most decorated slopestyle athlete in X Games history (male or female), Anderson used her trademark smooth, stylish riding to earn her seventh-consecutive X Games silver medal.

Marino is also podium perfect at X Games, having earned three medals in three starts—all of them coming in 2017. The 19 year old earned bronze in big air at Aspen in January and topped the field in slopestyle at Aspen with a gold-medal performance.

Anderson and Marino, as well as Hailey Langland (San Clemente), who was sixth in slopestyle, will have a chance to earn another medal in big air tonight.

Anna Gasser of Austria continued her dominant season with a gold medal slopestyle win at Hafjell.

There were no American men in the slopestyle final. Red Gerard (Silverthorne, Colo.) just missed the cut, finishing ninth. Brock Crouch (Carlsbad) was 10th and Brandon Davis (Big Bear) was 14th.