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IDAHO STATESMAN • IDAHOSTATESMAN.COM **2.22.07** THURSDAY

Snowboarding's elite headed to Tamarack

BY BRIAN MURPHY
IDAHO STATESMAN

The world's best snowboarders are descending on Idaho this week in search of big air and big money.

Tamarack Resort near Donnelly is hosting the final event of the U.S. Snowboard Grand Prix series. The first Idaho event in the 11-year history of the Grand Prix has attracted some of the biggest names in halfpipe and snowboardcross.

Olympic and X Games medalists Gretchen Bleiler, Kelly Clark, Steve Fisher, Ross Powers and Scotty Lago are expected to compete in the halfpipe event. Olympic silver medalist

Lindsey Jacobellis and Sandpoint native Nate Holland are among the biggest names in the snowboardcross events. There are 230 athletes entered.

"It's new to everybody. It's new to riders, staff, sponsors, VIPs," said Eric Webster, Grand Prix tour director. "It's created a real intriguing event."

Practice at Tamarack's 22-foot halfpipe begins today. The competition starts Friday with men's halfpipe qualifying and continues through the Sunday. The halfpipe finals are Saturday at



Gretchen
Bleiler



Kelly
Clark

1:30 p.m. Snowboardcross takes over Sunday with time trials beginning at 9 a.m. and the finals set for noon.

The event will be televised by NBC at noon on March 10.

Tamarack, which opened in 2004, decided to bid for the event last May and was awarded one of three Grand Prix stops in this year's series in early August, said Jim Spent, the resort's vice president of operations.

This year's other events were held in Breckenridge, Colo., and Mt. Bachelor, Ore.

"It's the first time anybody in Idaho has had anything quite like this," Spent said.

The facility's reputation in the ski and snowboard community and its layout encouraged the United States Ski and Snowboard Association (USSA) to look into the proposal. Webster said the resort put together a "great bid package."

SEE SNOWBOARD ON SPORTS 3

SCHEDULE, DETAILS INSIDE

Want to go watch the U.S. Snowboard Grand Prix event? We've got all the details, including a schedule of events and shuttle information. **SPORTS 3**

SNOWBOARD

CONTINUED FROM SPORTS 1

"We had heard nothing but good things about Tamarack. It has a huge commitment to snowboarding and it has great base-area venues," Webster said.

The Grand Prix series awards \$300,000 in cash prizes. The winner of this weekend's halfpipe collects \$14,000. And the overall Grand Prix halfpipe champions (men's and women's) — based on standings compiled through all three series events — win a Chevy Colorado truck. Fisher, the 2004 X Games champion, leads the men's standings through two events. Clark, a 2002 Olympic gold medalist,

won the first two events to lock up the women's overall title.

"Though the event hasn't begun, Webster said the resort has lived up to its advance billing and could become a regular stop on the Grand Prix. Tamarack signed a one-year deal to host this year's event.

"There are resorts that become classic sites for us, and it's certainly my hope that Tamarack becomes one of those," Webster said. "We'd like to come back here in the future."

"This week's weather also helped. More than a foot of snow fell at the resort Tuesday evening and Wednesday, Spent said.

"Snow's no big deal. It's if it gets really, really warm or if it

hadn't snowed beforehand," he said.

Spent said he was expecting between 2,000 and 3,000 spectators each day. Tamarack is offering shuttle service to and from the event from various locations in the state.

Shuttles can be picked up in McCall, Lake Fork, Donnelly, Cascade and Boise. Fans must make reservations online for the Boise shuttle.

"There is no charge for admission, but regular lift rates apply. Spent said the competition forced the closure of the lower part of one run and the halfpipe is closed through the competition.

"There's minimal impact to everyday skiing," he said.

U.S. SNOWBOARD GRAND PRIX EVENT AT TAMARACK

DETAILS

The event near Donnelly is free.

The halfpipe, snowboardcross finish line and entertainment and food are accessible without a lift ticket and located within walking distance of the shuttle drop-off.

You'll need lift ticket to view more of the snowboardcross course.

For more information visit www.tamarackidaho.com

SCHEDULE

Subject to change

TODAY

10 a.m. - 3 p.m.: Halfpipe practice

FRIDAY

8:30 a.m.-9:30 a.m.: Men's halfpipe practice

9 a.m. - 2 p.m.: Snowboardcross practice

9:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.: Men's halfpipe qualifying

2 p.m. - 3 p.m.: Women's halfpipe practice

SATURDAY

9 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.: Snowboardcross practice

9 a.m. - 9:25 a.m.: Women's halfpipe practice

9:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.: Women's halfpipe qualifiers

12:30 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.: Halfpipe finals practice

1:30 p.m. - 3 p.m.: Halfpipe finals

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SUNDAY

8:30 a.m. - 8:55 a.m.: Snowboardcross practice

9 a.m. - 1 p.m.: Snowboardcross time trials

1:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.: Snowboardcross final heats

SHUTTLE & PARKING

Parking is available at Tamarack Resort but event organizers are encouraging spectators to use free shuttle services.

Only the Boise shuttle requires advance registration and a fee of \$10 for non-season pass holders. Tamarack season pass holders must register in advance, but will not be charged. Registration for the Boise shuttle is available through www.tamarackidaho.com.

SHUTTLES TO TAMARACK:

FROM BOISE AREA
(pickup at Home Depot in Eagle, 2808 E. State)

➤ Morning: 7:45 a.m.

FROM MCCALL
(pickup at Jim's Grocery)

➤ Morning: 6:20 a.m., 8, 8:15, 10

➤ Evening: noon, 2 p.m., 2:30, 4, 6, 8, 10

FROM LAKE FORK
(pickup at Merc Station, 13835 Hwy 55)

➤ Morning: 6:30 a.m., 8:25

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FROM DONNELLY

(pickup at Roseberry Plaza)

➤ Morning: 6:40 a.m., 8:20, 8:35, 10:20

➤ Evening: 12:20 p.m., 2:20, 4:20, 6:20, 8:20, 10:20

FROM CASCADE
(pickup at Ashley Inn)

➤ Morning: 6:20 a.m., 8:15

SHUTTLES FROM TAMARACK:
TO BOISE AREA

(pickup at Seven Devils Pub area)

➤ Evening: 4:45 p.m.

TO MCCALL, LAKE FORK, DONNELLY

(pickup at Crane Creek Market)

➤ Morning: 9 a.m., 11

➤ Afternoon: 1 p.m., 1:45, 3, 5, 5:10, 9, 11

TO CASCADE
(pickup at Crane Creek Market)

➤ Evening: 5:10 p.m.

LIFT TICKET PRICES:

➤ **Weekday:** \$45 for adults; \$40 for seniors (65 and over); \$38 for college and military (ID required); \$29 for youth (7-17); free for children (6 and under)

➤ **Weekend:** \$58 for adults; \$40 for seniors (65 and over); \$38 for college and military (ID required); \$29 for youth (7-17); free for children (6 and under)