

Colorado skiing speeds up after slow December

By Bill Dunbar

The winter storm that dumped up to a foot of snow on the Colorado Rockies last Monday could not have come at a better time for the ski resort operators.

Colorado is suffering from a lack of snow comparable to the disaster of 1976-77. And until the latest storm, many of the ski areas were ready to close parts of the mountains because of lack of sufficient depth.

March will be a busy time with students on spring break and families who cancelled ski trips in December rescheduling them for one last chance of the year. The lift lines will be long.

Summit County, which annually carries the bulk of the student-skiers, offers four mountains on which to ski. Breckenridge, Keystone, Arapahoe Basin and Copper Mountain are all within 20 minutes of Dillon and Frisco. Vail is 45 minutes from Dillon west on I-70 with Aspen another 1 1/2 hours on west.

Both Keystone and Copper Mountain have added new chair-lifts this year opening up new high intermediate runs. Lifts operate from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. daily at Keystone, Cooper Mountain, Breckenridge and Arapahoe Basin opens at 9 a.m. and closes at 4 p.m. Upper lifts at all areas close at 3:30 p.m.

All-day lift tickets run from \$15 per day at Summit County areas to \$18 per day at Aspen and Vail. Half-day tickets, which permit a skier to start at noon, are \$11 per day in Summit County and \$12 per day at Aspen and Vail. Ski packages up to six days are substantially cheaper.

Rental equipment has been improved in quality and most of the areas deal with Rossignol skis and Burt II bindings. A rental package of skis, boots, and poles averages around \$9 per day. Ski repair shops at most areas will wax, sharpen, and tune skis.

Ski school lessons for adults range from \$15 per day to \$11 for half-day lessons. Private lessons cost \$25 per hour.

The cafeterias on the slopes have a variety of hamburgers, hot dogs, sodas and wines for lunches at noon.

The widest variety of nightlife is offered in Breckenridge. The Minerscamp in the Four Seasons Shopping Mall offers disco music with a dance floor. It is much the same as Little Bo's. The Four Seasons is at the bottom of Breckenridge's Peak 9.

Ice conditions existed last week before the big storm and two people were killed at Keystone. On Monday, the hospital at Keystone treated 19 people with broken bones. Skiers have a responsibility to themselves as well as other skiers. There are elements of risk in skiing which common sense and personal awareness can help reduce: When overtaking another skier, you must avoid the skier below you. You must not stop where you could obstruct a trail or are not visible from above. When entering a trail or starting downhill, yield to other skiers.

Enjoy the spring break and be careful.

travel

East of the Main Street is Shamus O'Toole's, a bar comparable to The Zoo Bar in Lincoln. They offer live music and cheap beer and mixed drinks. And for those people observing Lent, the Whale's Tail has excellent seafood.

Spring skiing conditions have existed for about the last month because daytime temperatures have been averaging 50 degrees. The warmer weather, though, has reduced the snow base substantially to where most areas have an average of 35 to 45 inches. Last season most areas had 80 to 90 inches of base snow.

Lift lines are generally the shortest at Arapahoe Basin, and free shuttles every half hour conveniently link it with Keystone, best known for its lengthy intermediate runs. Copper Mountain probably is the most challenging mountain in Summit County and usually has the best snow. Breckenridge is the best place to go if you have never skied before as it has an excellent beginner run.

Vail offers the most runs of any ski area in Colorado. The back bowls are a tremendous challenge for expert skiers. If you happen to be near Aspen on Saturday, give Snowmass a try. Saturdays are a transition day with people leaving and people coming. The lift lines are relatively short and Aspen offers a wide variety of runs for all levels of skiers.



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CINEMA 2
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1:40-3:40-5:40-7:40-9:40
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Back Roads R

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