

Rahlve's Banzai race expands beyond Sugar Bowl

By Jeremy Benson, ESPN

This winter, Daron Rahlves' ski-cross-style Silver Belt Banzai Race, previously a one-off event held at California's Sugar Bowl ski area, will become a three-series tour around Lake Tahoe.

Known as the Rahlves Banzai Series, the races will be held at Alpine Meadows (Jan. 22-23), Kirkwood (Feb. 5-6) and Sugar Bowl (March 12-13) and will feature skiers and snowboarders going head-to-head around gates set on big-mountain terrain.

"I thought, let's start a new tradition and build a tour off the success of the last two Silver Belt Banzais," Rahlves says, "and take it to other cool places like Alpine Meadows and Kirkwood."

The first-ever Silver Belt Race was held at Sugar Bowl toward the end of the resort's very first season, in April of 1940. The GS-style race ran skiers down the challenging natural terrain of Mt. Lincoln. In a time before World Cup competition, the race was widely considered to be one of the toughest of that era and often attracted the top American and European competitors. The Silver Belt Race was held for 35 seasons, the last in 1975.

After it ended, the race became something of a legend. A trail was named after it at Sugar Bowl and black and white pictures hung from the walls of the Belt Room Bar in the ski area's Disney Lodge.

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