

Tahoe's Sullivan, Ganong impressive in spring speed training

By U.S. Ski Team

MAMMOTH MOUNTAIN – Audi FIS Alpine World Cup winners Marco Sullivan (Squaw Valley) and Steven Nyman (Sundance, Utah) are not interested in holding back during spring training. But according to newly named speed Head Coach Forest Carey, it was the young athletes holding down the throttle at Mammoth Mountain.

“The young guys were completely willing to throw down in May – they’re definitely eager,” said Carey, the 2011 USSA International Alpine Coach of the Year. “We free skied a few days with over three feet of fresh powder and trained full-on downhill and super G training in some pretty bumpy snow with flat light towards the end. It was a good mix.”

Thanks to incredible late season snow conditions, the Team was able to run near full-length downhill and super G from the top of the cornice. The opportunity was a huge bonus for a group that missed a good portion of speed training last summer due to rough weather in New Zealand.

“Mammoth Mountain, as they always do, really did a great job accommodating us,” said Carey. “They spent a lot of time on the cats pushing things around, which turned into 75-80 seconds of downhill and super G training. We’re pretty lucky to be able to run from the top because that really takes up a lot of the mountain.”

Young athletes Wiley Maple (Aspen), Will Gregorak (Longmont, Colo.) and Tommy Biesemeyer (Keene, N.Y.) had their foot on the gas the entire camp. But Sullivan, Olympic bronze medalist

Andrew Weibrecht (Lake Placid) and Travis Ganong (Squaw Valley) showed they were ready to play after returning from injuries and Erik Fisher (Middleton, Idaho) is ready to carry his late winter charge into the 2012 prep period.

Weibrecht missed the last three months of the season after shoulder surgery as did Sullivan, who was out following a December head injury and Ganong broke his hand while competing at the February World Championships.

“Ganong looks like he’s darn near 100 percent and Marco is right there too. It’s safe to say that injury-wise – nothing is holding them back,” added Carey. “Weibrecht was only with us for a week since he was still wrapping things up at Dartmouth, but he looked solid.”

Most impressive for Carey was the team dynamic with Sullivan and Nyman taking leadership roles within the group.

“Marco and those guys were helping the young guys with their glide turns and subtle things for downhill, which was cool to see,” he said.

“There were a few days where Marco would stand on the side and just watch those young guys like Biesemeyer just slay down the pitch. He has such a good eye for making subtle changes to find speed.”

While the men’s speed program has a brief break from formal camps, their conditioning programs are now locked full-time. Carey, however, will return to snow in a few days to help technical Head Coach Mike Day with a training camp for his group back in Mammoth.

“I’m psyched for the new challenge as head coach,” said Carey. “It’s quite the group with a lot of different types of skiers who have a lot of different needs. But we have an awesome support structure in place and most importantly athletes who want to win.”