

Rahlves' Banzai Tour begins at Kirkwood

The Rahlves' Banzai Tour returns to Lake Tahoe ski resorts with competitions in February and March. The event is considered the world's premier big mountain freeskiing meets skier/boarder-cross experience and is becoming one of the region's most popular spectator events.

Kicking off at Kirkwood Ski Resort the weekend of Feb. 11-12, participants (18 years and older) will go head-to-head four at a time, top-to-bottom, down a wide-open course over natural terrain and snow conditions. The four-stop event hits North Lake Tahoe Feb. 23-24 at Alpine Meadows.

A solo-qualifying run on Saturday ranks the top 32 men from ski and board and the top 16 women from ski and board to Sunday's finals and a shot at the title. The top two in each round advance through the brackets until the remaining final four battle it out for the podium and title of Banzai Champ.

The Silver Belt Banzai race first took place in the 1940s at Sugar Bowl. In 2009 and 2010, one banzai race was held each year at Sugar Bowl. In 2011, the Rahlves' Banzai Tour was created. Rahlves is at each event to open up the qualifying runs and assist competitors with tactics.

After the Alpine Meadows race (called the Beaver Bowl Banzai), the tour continues at Squaw Valley for the KT-22 Banzai (March 3-4) and concludes at Sugar Bowl with the Silver Belt Banzai (March 10-11) when Rahlves will compete in the "Super Final" taking on the men ski winners from each stop. The Rahlves' Banzai Tour purse prizes total \$80,000.

Warren Miller Entertainment showcased the 2011 Rahlves' Banzai Tour in the recent film "Like There's No Tomorrow". For 2012, the event will be covered by NBC Red Bull Signature Series,

airing nationally March 27.