

Judge: Vail Resorts has rights to Park City ski resort

By Jason Blevins, Denver Post

A Utah District Court ruled Wednesday that Park City Mountain Resort officials failed to renew their historic lease for a majority of their ski terrain and the landowner is allowed to lease the ski area's upper terrain to a new operator.

That means Vail Resorts just won the rights to more than two-thirds of the land beneath Utah's most popular ski area. And it means that Park City Mountain Resort owner Powdr Corp. will go down in history as captaining the ski industry's most costly clerical error: a days-late filing to renew their decades-old, sweetheart lease could forever change their flagship ski area, which has seen Powdr invest more than \$100 million.

Powdr Corp. argued it was an "honest mistake" when the resort operator was a couple days late filing paperwork to renew its lease for land beneath Park City Mountain Resort. It was paying landowner Talisker Corp. about \$150,000 a year for the land, per the series of 20-year leases first forged in the 1970s. For comparison, Vail Resorts is paying Talisker \$25 million a year plus a percentage of revenue every year to lease the adjacent 4,000-acre Canyons ski area.

Talisker refused to sign a new lease with Powdr and went looking for a new tenant. Powdr sued Talisker to force a new deal. Talisker leased Canyons to Vail Resorts on the condition that the continent's largest resort operator takes over the Park City Mountain Resort legal battle, calling Vail Resorts a "dramatically better operator" than Powdr.

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