

Snowmakers create a Heavenly opening day



Opening day at Heavenly Mountain Resort is an event unto itself. Photos/Kathryn Reed

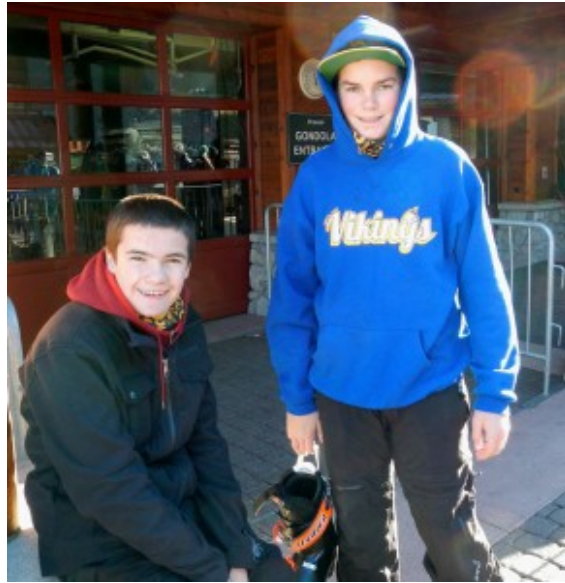
By Kathryn Reed

First tracks happen every day of the ski season. First tracks of the season, well, you can only get those on opening day.

Gunnar Barnwell was going to make sure he christened the slopes of Heavenly Mountain Resort for the 2014-15. The 13-year-old arrived at the gondola entrance at 5:30am Nov. 21 in below freezing temperatures.

He didn't mind waiting around for 3½ hours until the resort opened; after all this was the Whittell High School student's first opening day. (Whittell doesn't have classes on Fridays.) He admitted part of the draw was to have an opportunity to win one of the raffle prizes offered to the first 100 people in

line.



Gunnar Barnwell, left, is first in line Nov. 21 for opening day and his friend, Logan Langemeier, third.

It was Barnwell's buddy, Logan Langemeier, who won the GoPro. And to think he didn't arrive until 7am.

This arrival time put the 15-year-old third in line. The South Tahoe High student was playing hooky from school on what was his second opening day.

Jennifer Wolf of Santa Cruz was second in line.

"I'm anxious (to ski)," Wolf told *Lake Tahoe News* as to why she showed up at 6am. "I sat out last year with a knee injury."

She's been skiing Heavenly for 37 years. With her parents having a cabin nearby, it makes doing so all that much easier.



Nearly 200 people wait for the gondola to open to signal the start of the 2014-15 season.

For Brad Drake of Reno this was his fifth opening day.

“It means the rest of the season is ahead of us,” Drake told *Lake Tahoe News*.

His favorite opening day: “Two years ago when I was lapping the face before Thanksgiving.”

That won't happen this year. However, snowmaking was continuing on unopened trails throughout the morning, with the anticipation of more terrain on the Nevada side being available as conditions allow.

While only the gondola and Tamarack chairlift are open, the snowmaking crew has covered the 14 acres with an abundance of snow. No obstacles, excellent conditions. Four terrain park features are also available to the skier's left of California Trail.



A mini terrain park has four features.