

Close call with avalanche a scary lesson

By Benjamin Spillman, Reno Gazette-Journal

There are a lot of reasons Jason Layh shouldn't have been caught in a Sierra Nevada avalanche late last year.

For starters the range is known for its heavy, stable snowpack even in big years, let alone during the fourth consecutive year of drought and meager snow.

And Layh is an experienced, knowledgeable skier who understands the danger of avalanche terrain and skis accordingly.

But none of that mattered in December 2014 when he and three friends headed to Castle Peak north of Truckee to make turns following a few days of fresh snowfall.

But the rewards of backcountry skiing come with risk, as Layh and his group were about to be reminded.

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