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Snow report

Updated: 1.30pm Tuesday 2 December 2014

Tension is rising in the Alps with little or no meaningful snow below 2000m (2500m in certain regions) and less than three weeks to go before the Christmas rush.

No need to push the panic button quite yet though – some of the best seasons haven't got going until deep into December and the situation can turn around very quickly. What's more, the medium term forecast does give us some reason to be optimistic, with the various weather models hinting at some significant and widespread snowfalls over the next couple of weeks or so.

Back to the here and now and the best snow is at high altitude in the south-western Alps – notably western Italy and southern Switzerland. Indeed if we had to single out one area for praise it would be **Zermatt/Cervinia** where there is now 170km on offer (by far the greatest extent in the Alps) with skiing possible all the way back resort on the Italian side.

Elsewhere in the Alps there are plenty of other options, most of which are limited in extent, but there are 70km+ of pistes open in **Sölden**, **Obergurgl** and **Ischgl** – the latter two without the aid of a glacier. For most of the Alps, however, it is all still do to and we will be keeping a very close eye on the upcoming forecasts...

There is better news across the pond where most (though not all) western US and Canadian resorts have seen plenty of new snow over the last week or so.

Austria

Just like in many other parts of the Alps, snow is conspicuously thin or absent from many Austrian resorts. The best conditions are in the glacier resorts such as **Hintertux** (0/185cm) and **Sölden** (0/172cm). However, there is also some reasonable piste skiing in non-glacial **Ischgl** (0/40cm) and **Obergurgl** (5/75cm), at least at altitude.

There isn't a great deal of snow in the forecast this week – at least not until later on Friday/Saturday when more widespread flurries are possible.



Very little snow in Lech, which is due to open this weekend - Photo: lech-zuers.at

France

Val Thorens (40/80cm) is still the best bet right now in France, despite its modest snow depths, with 15 lifts serving 25 runs. **Tignes** (0/60cm) and **Val d'Isère** (0/30cm) are two other resorts open on a daily basis, but the action is mostly confined to their respective glaciers and lots more snow is needed before other parts of **L'Espace Killy** can even consider opening.

Further south you can also ski in **Les 2 Alpes** (0/80cm), but again only at altitude.

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Skiing in June? Yep, there are plenty of good options in the Alps! tinyurl.com/llt6xzy



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In short, much more snow is needed just about everywhere. A few snow flurries are possible here and there over the next few days, perhaps becoming more widespread later in the week.



View from the Grande Motte glacier towards Tignes Le Lac, with much more snow clearly needed at lower altitude - Photo: tignes.net

Italy

Cervinia (35/215cm), combined with **Zermatt** continues to offer the best skiing in the Alps with top to bottom coverage (at least on the Italian side) and 170km of pistes open.

Elsewhere in Italy there are a scattering of more limited openings, some glacial such as **Passo Tonale** (0/300cm) and **Val Senales** (5/250cm), but others not, such as **Madonna di Campiglio** (10/90cm) and **Bormio** (0/100cm) both of which have reasonable cover at altitude.

Further snow showers are likely at altitude across the Italian resorts this week.



Masses of snow still at altitude in Cervinia - Photo: cervinia.it

Switzerland

Weathertoski.co.uk is just back from **Davos** (0/60cm) where there are a handful of runs open above 2200m or so, but little or no snow below this level. We also visited **Engelberg** (0/115cm) where the snow line is even higher and, except for one itinerary run, the skiing is confined to the glacier.

For better conditions you need to head south – to **Andermatt** (0/280cm), **Saas-Fee** (7/230cm) and **Zermatt** (0/80cm), all of which have excellent cover at altitude. Indeed combined with **Cervinia** (Italy), **Zermatt** offers the greatest extent of open slope (176km) in the Alps right now.

Some snow flurries are forecast over the next few days, particularly towards the end of the week.



Little or no snow below 2000m in Davos - Photo: weathertoski

Rest of Europe

The mild weather has also taken its toll in the Pyrenees with little serious skiing on offer to date.

Better news in Scandinavia where lots of resorts are at least partially open. **Hemsedal** (Norway) in particular has benefited from significant recent snow and now has a 62cm mid-mountain base.

USA

Most Colorado resorts are in decent shape following recent snowfalls, with **Vail** (51cm mid-mountain base) and **Winter Park** (64cm mid-mountain base) offering more open terrain than most.

Elsewhere, **Jackson Hole** in Wyoming (99/109cm) and **Alta/Snowbird** in Utah (84cm mid-mountain) also have plenty of snow even if both are still only partially operational. By contrast, **Mammoth** (36/46cm) has relied heavily on artificial snow to date, but there is good news on the way with snow forecast this week.

Canada

More and more resorts are opening, or about to open, most with fresh snow - including **Fernie** (97cm mid-mountain base) opening 5 December. Already up and running is **Banff/Lake Louise** (97/114cm).

Further west, **Whistler** (50cm mid-mountain base) hasn't done quite so well - there is some decent piste skiing on the upper mountain, but more snow would be very welcome.



Plenty of new snow in Fernie, due to open 5 December - Photo: fernie.com

Next full snow report will be on Thursday 4 December 2014, but see [Today in the Alps](#) for daily updates