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Snow report

Updated: 11.30am Thursday 4 December 2014

Snow conditions in the Alps have not altered a huge amount since our last report on Tuesday. However, change is afoot with an increasing chance of significant snow for many parts of the Alps over the next week or so.

Right now the best snow conditions continue to be found on the glaciers or at high altitude in the southern Alps. Generally speaking there is very little meaningful snow below 2000m thanks to mild and unusually persistent southerly winds that have come to define this pre-season period.

Zermatt and **Cervinia** offer by far the most extensive and varied terrain in the Alps right now, with a combined total of 179km of pistes. Other good bets are Austria's **Sölden**, **Ischgl** and **Obergurgl**, all of which offer 70km+ of terrain, the latter two without the aid of any glaciers.

Elsewhere in the Alps, there are bits and pieces open but much more snow is needed if we are to witness anything like a decent overall start to the season. Fortunately the forecast is encouraging with several "opportunities" for snow over the next 10 days or so.

Across the pond, the news is generally quite good with decent snow cover for the time of year across most of the Rockies, and snow now also falling in California.

Austria

For the most part, skiing in Austria is still limited to the glacier resorts, though **Ischgl** (0/40cm) and **Obergurgl** (50/90cm) are two notable exceptions, each offering around 70km of slopes despite their modest bases.

For the best snow quality though, the likes of **Hintertux** (185cm glacier base) and **Sölden** (167cm glacier base) are probably better bets.

Below 2000m or so there is little or no meaningful snow which means it is still all to do for the majority of Austrian resorts. Some snow is forecast to low altitude this weekend and early next week but in relatively modest quantities for now.



Still looking very green in much of Austria. This is Zell-am-See - Photo: foto-webcam.eu

France

There are only a handful of openings in France right now, all at high altitude, with most resorts still in dire need of more snow. **Val Thorens** (40/80cm) has about 15 lifts open and offers the greatest extent of skiing in France. **Tignes** (5/60cm) and **Val d'Isère** (0/30cm) are also open, but not yet connected, with most of the action confined to their respective glaciers. You can also ski on a daily basis in **Les 2 Alpes** (0/80cm), but again only at the very top.

Some other resorts are likely to open at the weekend but certain big names (e.g. **Courchevel**) have had to delay by a week. The good news is that some

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moderate snowfalls are likely to low altitudes over the weekend and into next week.



Some reasonable piste skiing in Val Thorens, but even here more snow is clearly needed - Photo: valthorens.com

Italy

There is fresh snow across many central and eastern parts of the Italian Alps which is good news for the few resorts open here – such as **Madonna di Campiglio** (10/90cm), **Bormio** (0/100cm) and the **Val Senales** glacier (5/260cm). However, by far the greatest extent of skiing remains in **Cervinia** (35/215cm), where, combined with **Zermatt** there are now 179km of pistes open.

Some Italian resorts will see snow flurries this weekend but they will, on the whole, be lighter and more scattered than on the northern side of the Alps.



Fresh snow at altitude in Madonna di Campiglio, as elsewhere in the Dolomites - Photo: campigliodolomiti.org

Switzerland

The best skiing in Switzerland (if not the Alps) remains in **Zermatt** (80cm mid-mountain base) where there are 179km of pistes on offer if you include **Cervinia**. Nearby **Saas-Fee** (5/210cm) also has lots of snow at altitude, as does **Andermatt** (0/280cm), both of which are also favoured by the southerly weather patterns that have dominated the last few weeks.

Elsewhere in Switzerland there are a handful of other limited openings including **Davos** (0/60cm), **Engelberg** (0/115cm) and **Verbier** (0/35cm).

Like elsewhere in the Alps, there is little if any meaningful snow below 2000m (except for some parts of the far south). Some relief is on its way this weekend with flurries expected to relatively low levels and further snow likely next week.



A dusting of recent snow in Davos - Photo: davos.ch

Rest of Europe

Outside of the Alps, Scandinavia remains the best bet with plenty of partial openings, the best of these in Norway where **Hemsedal** boasts a very respectable 74cm mid-mountain base.

USA

Jackson Hole (Wyoming) has now surpassed 100 inches for the season (cumulative total) and will open 100% of its area on Friday. Its upper mountain base stands at 130cm.

Snow has also been falling in California – with at least 50cm up top in **Mammoth** which until now had been enduring another slow start to the season.

Colorado resorts haven't seen much new snow in recent days but, on the whole, conditions remain good (at least on piste) thanks to the multiple storms experienced in the middle/latter part of November.



Great snow in Jackson Hole, which claims it will be 100% open on Friday.

Canada

The best conditions are inland where **Fernie** (due to open on Friday 5 December) has around 100cm of settled snow up top. Already up and running, and in great condition for the time of year, are **Banff/Lake Louise** (96/103cm).

Further west, **Whistler** is off to an indifferent start with an upper base of just 51cm. Some snow is expected here over the next few days but also rain lower down.

Next full snow report will be on Monday 8 December 2014, but see [Today in the Alps](#) for daily updates