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## Snow report

Updated: 10.15am Thursday 11 December 2014

Conditions have been slowly improving in many (but not all) parts of the Alps this week but we are still yet to see the massive dumps needed to properly ignite the early season.

The best snow cover remains at altitude in the southern Alps, from **Isola 2000** in France across to **Cervinia**, **Zermatt** and **Saas-Fee** on the Swiss/Italian border, in parts of Lombardy (e.g. **Livigno**) and towards the western Dolomites (**Passo Tonale**). Some southern Austrian resorts closest to the Italian border (e.g. **Obergurgl**) are also in good shape.

In general, the northern Alps have less snow, though even here there is some reasonable piste skiing at altitude – for example, in **Val Thorens** in France, and **Davos** in Switzerland.

On the whole though, we are still massively behind the curve and lots more snow is needed to get the 2014-15 ski season back on track.

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### Austria

The greatest extent of skiing in Austria right now is to be found in **Obergurgl** (10/95cm) where 105km of its 110km of pistes are open and conditions are pretty good for the time of year.

Elsewhere in Austria the best skiing is to be found in resorts with glaciers such as **Sölden** (5/185cm), **Kaprun** (10/160cm) and **Hintertux** (15/195cm), all of which have a good selection of pistes available.

Most Austrian resorts are, however, still desperately short of snow including **St Anton** and **Lech** where their upper bases are little more than 10-15cm. Some runs will open here on Friday, we are told, but in a very limited capacity.

The forecast isn't too promising either. A few very light flurries will affect the northern Austrian Alps today (Thursday). It will then turn milder over the weekend with the odd shower here and there, but no significant snow in prospect.



Great snow on the glaciers in Austria, but many lower resorts are in desperate need of snow. This is Mölltal in Carinthia - Photo: foto-webcam.eu

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### France

The greatest extent of skiing in France right now is in **Val Thorens** (50/90cm) where an impressive 47 pistes are open. The rest of the 3 Valleys (**Courchevel**, **Méribel** etc) will join the action tomorrow, but in a more limited capacity.

**Val d'Isère** (0/30cm) and **Tignes** (5/50cm) are also open – but remain unconnected for now with most (but not quite all) of the action confined to their

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respective glaciers.

A handful of other resorts in the French Alps are also operational, including **Les 2 Alpes** (2/80cm) and little known **Isola 2000** (47/120cm) near Nice, where there is top to bottom cover and nearly half of its 130km of slopes are now open.

Further partial openings are due this weekend (**Serre Chevalier** says it will open 70km of its area) but, on the whole, there is still a serious snow deficit and much more is needed to get the season back on track.

Unfortunately there isn't a huge amount of snow in the immediate forecast – some very light flurries close to the northern foothills today then bits and pieces over the weekend, but nothing really significant.



Plenty of snow up top in Serre Chevalier, which says it will open 70% of its area this weekend - Photo: serre-chevalier.com

### Italy

There is still plenty of good skiing available in Italy if you know where to look. Best of all is **Cervinia** (30/215cm) where over 213km of its runs are now open (shared with **Zermatt**), easily the greatest extent in the Alps right now.

Other good bets are **Livigno** (120/125cm) where some 23 runs are open, **Passo Tonale** (30/350cm) and **Champoluc** (5/260cm).

Generally speaking though, most resorts are still short of snow with much more needed before the Christmas rush, particularly below 2000m. There is a little snow forecast here and there this weekend but it remains to be seen in what quantities.



Decent snow cover in Livigno - Photo: valtline.it

### Switzerland

Like everywhere else in the Alps, snow levels in Switzerland are (on the whole) way below where they should be for mid-December. There is, however, still some good skiing to be found, particularly at altitude and in the south.

**Zermatt** (0/215cm) remains the best bet in Switzerland with 213km of pistes now available (shared with **Cervinia**). Other options with a reasonable selection of runs include **Saas-Fee** (9/210cm), **St Moritz** (0/91cm) and **Davos** (4/68cm) but lower down (particularly in the north) much more snow is needed.

The forecast isn't particularly promising either. A few very light flurries will fall across the northern Alps today then we might see a bit more snow in places over the weekend, but there are still no major dumps on the horizon.



Excellent conditions still at altitude in Saas-Fee - Photo: Peter Enderby

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### Rest of Europe

Snow has been falling in the **Pyrenees** with vastly improved conditions in the likes of **Soldeu**, Andorra (30/70cm) where a good proportion of the area is now open.

**Scandinavia** also has plenty of open resorts with some of the best skiing in **Hemsedal**, Norway (71cm mid-mountain) thanks to the big storms a couple of weeks back.

**Bulgaria's** season is underway, albeit in a very limited capacity, with just two runs open in **Bansko**.

Meanwhile things are looking promising in **Scotland** with snow starting to pile up, though no resorts are operational here as yet.



Snow starting to pile up in the Scottish ski resorts, though nothing is open yet. This is Cairngorm - Photo: winterhighland.com

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### USA

Colorado resorts have seen very little snow in the last week but there remains some reasonable piste skiing in the likes of **Vail** (51cm mid-mountain) and **Winter Park** (53cm mid-mountain) thanks to multiple storms back in November.

It's a similar story in **Jackson Hole**, Wyoming (134cm mid-mountain) and **Snowbird**, Utah (74cm mid-mountain), though both these areas can expect some new snow in the next few days.

Talking of new snow, long-suffering Californian resorts are in for a treat with more than 50cm in places later today - which should greatly improve conditions in the likes of **Mammoth** (56cm mid-mountain).

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### Canada

Nearly all lifts are open in the **Banff/Lake Louise** area now where the base is 89/93cm depending on altitude, and conditions are excellent for the time of year.

Further west, **Whistler** (61cm mid mountain) has been experiencing some rain lower down, but colder air is now digging in with new snow to lower altitudes,

which should improve conditions.



Good early season skiing in the Banff/Lake Louise area - Photo: skilouise.com

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**Next full snow report will be on Monday 15 December 2014, but see [Today in the Alps](#) for daily updates**