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### Snow report

**Updated: 6.35pm Monday 5 January 2015**

It has been an eventful weekend of weather, at least in the northern half of the Alps, with rain, snow, strong winds and even a little sun in places. This week's snow report is therefore decidedly mixed.

The bad news is that it rained for longer and at higher altitude than originally forecast, especially in the northern French and western Swiss Alps where it reached 2200m in places on Saturday evening. Not surprisingly this had quite an impact on snow conditions below 2000m, with low resorts such as **Morzine**, **Megève** and **Villars** now in serious trouble again. In Austria, the rain/snow limit was lower, starting at around 1800m in the west, 1000m in the east and lowering to the valley bottoms by Sunday.

No surprises then that at altitude there has been some snow – not a huge amount in the northern French Alps (typically 10-20cm above 2200m), with a bit more in the Swiss Alps (typically 15-30cm at the same height), but the most falling in Austria (30-50cm at altitude, locally more in the east). Don't forget that the snow in Austria has also fallen to much lower levels, especially in the Salzburgerland, Upper Austria and Styria.

As for the southern Alps (i.e. Italy, southern French Alps, far south-east of Switzerland and far south of Austria), there have been some showers here and there but, by and large, they have again missed the heaviest precipitation. Indeed in complete contrast to our early reports in November 2014, Italian resorts are now the least snowy of the four main Alpine countries, with many resorts (especially the lower ones) relying heavily on artificial back-up.

The forecast for the Alps isn't particularly brilliant either. Most of this week will be dry and increasingly mild, especially at altitude. Further stormy weather is likely later in the week and over the weekend but once again rain is likely to be a nuisance at lower altitudes. Stay tuned!

Across the pond, **Jackson Hole** (Wyoming) has caught the eye with over half a metre of fresh snow in just 24 hours, with more in the forecast.

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### Austria

Austria has the freshest snow in the Alps right now, especially east of Innsbruck (Salzburgerland, Upper Austria, Styria) where 30-70cm has fallen over the last few days. High altitude **Obertauern** (100/140cm) is as good as anywhere right now, but lots of low resorts such as **Söll** (55/105cm) are also now in good shape.

Further west (Tirol, Vorarlberg) rain was more of an issue over the weekend, but it did turn back to snow on Sunday leaving the likes of **Lech** (50/110cm) and **St Anton** (25/170cm) in pretty reasonable condition, especially at altitude.

Further south there has been only a little new snow, with **Bad Kleinkirchheim** (10/40cm) still surviving on a perilously thin base.

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Skiing in June? Yep, there are plenty of good options in the Alps! [tinyurl.com/llt6xzy](http://tinyurl.com/llt6xzy)



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There was further fresh snow in the eastern Austrian Alps today. This is Obertauern, where conditions will be as good as anywhere once the weather clears on Tuesday - Photo: obertauern.at

### France

In the French Alps the situation is a question of altitude. Below 2000m conditions are pretty ropy in both the north and south - in the north because of the recent rain, in the south because it simply hasn't snowed very much for quite some time.

For the best conditions you therefore need to stick to resorts with lots of skiing above 2000m, such as **Val d'Isère** (40/90cm) and **Val Thorens** (95/135cm). It is worth noting though that even here snow depths are way below what they should be at this time of year and off-piste is limited and/or dangerous.

Lower down, the likes of **Les Gets** (20/55cm) and **Megève/St Gervais** (15/90cm) urgently need another dump (or three) if they want to secure a convincing base for the rest of the season.



Good piste skiing at altitude in Alpe d'Huez, but snow depths remain below average for early January - Photo: alpedhuez.com

### Italy

The Italian Alps now have, on average, the least snow of any of the four major Alpine countries. Sure, there is still plenty of good piste skiing around, especially in the higher resorts.

The trouble is that despite Italy having led the way in November, it hasn't really snowed much since, with most lower resorts/slopes now heavily reliant on artificial snow. **Val Gardena**, for example, has just 5/50cm depending on altitude, while **La Thuile** has 20/65cm. Higher altitude **Cervinia** (25/160cm) and **Passo Tonale** (40/350cm) are in better shape, but even here the off-piste is limited.



This view of the Kronplatz area in northern Italy is indicative of the situation in the southern Alps – i.e. no snow at low altitude! – Photo: foto-webcam.eu

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### Switzerland

Rain over the weekend proved a nuisance below about 2000-2200m in the Swiss Alps, which is a bit of a worry going forward for low resorts such as **Villars** (40/65cm) and **Wengen** (10/55cm).

Not surprisingly the best conditions are in resorts with plenty of skiing above 2000m, such as **Zermatt** (10/190cm) and **St Moritz** (17/195cm), but even here depths are below where they should be. There is also more snow at lower altitude in the eastern Swiss Alps than there is in the west right now.



Looking picturesque in Verbier today, but snow cover is deceptively thin at low altitude – Photo: verbier.ch

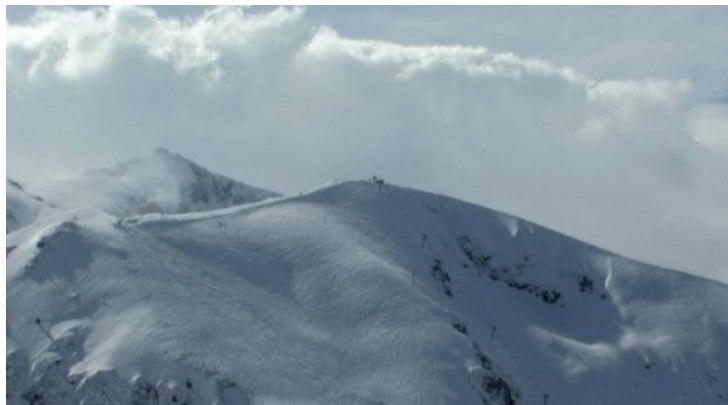
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### Rest of Europe

Conditions have been improving in Bulgaria thanks largely to snow-making, made possible by some bitterly cold weather. Leading resort **Bansko** has 30/110cm depending on altitude.

There is also good skiing available in many Pyrenean resorts, especially at altitude. **Soldeu** (Andorra) currently has 50/100cm depending on altitude. Conditions remain steady rather than spectacular in many Scandinavian resorts, with good on-piste skiing reported in both Norway's **Hemsedal** (75/80cm) and Sweden's **Åre** (37/40cm).

The situation in Scotland is constantly changing with the weather. In theory there is some limited piste skiing available, but snow cover is patchy and more would be welcome.



Much like the Alps there is plenty of good skiing on offer at altitude, but cover remains thin lower down. This is Guzet in the French Pyrenees - Photo: haut-couserans.com

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## USA

**Jackson Hole** (172/218cm) in Wyoming has some of the deepest, freshest snow in the western US right now on the back of a 55cm dump, and there is more in the forecast.

Snow has also fallen in some Colorado resorts, but generally in more modest quantities - **Breckenridge** has 132cm mid-mountain, while **Vail** has 107cm.

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## Canada

**Whistler** has seen over 30cm of new snow in the last 24 hours alone, bringing its mid-mountain base to a respectable 150cm. There is more in the forecast too, but temperatures will rise turning it to rain at most levels before the weather clears up.

Further east, temperatures will stay lower in **Banff/Lake Louise** where there is about 1m of snow packed down mid-mountain and most lifts are open.



Good skiing in the Lake Louise/Banff area right now - Photo: skilouise.com

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**Next full snow report will be on Thursday 8 January 2015, but see [Today in the Alps](#) for daily updates**