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Snow report

Updated: 2.45pm Thursday 22 January 2015

Following last weekend's dump, which dropped significant snow across most (though not quite all) Alpine areas, there have been further more localised falls this week. The heaviest of these have been in the southern Alps (notably Italy), and across the western and north-western foothills of the French Alps (e.g. **Villard de Lans** in the Vercors) where snow has fallen to very low altitudes.

Generally speaking, conditions are pretty good though we still mustn't hide from the fact that (on the whole) snow depths are below where they should be for mid-January.

The implications of this are threefold:

- 1. Some lower slopes are still thin and/or worn
- 2. Off-piste conditions are highly variable and often dangerous
- 3. More snow is still urgently needed to avoid potential problems (especially low down) later in the season.

Austria

Most Austrian resorts are offering reasonable rather than exceptional conditions for mid-January, with any powder from last weekend's storm largely tracked out.

On-piste conditions are excellent in high altitude resorts such as **Obergurgl** (40/145cm) and **Obertauern** (100/140cm), and pretty good in lower resorts such as **Zell-am-See** (20/85cm) and **Ellmau** (35/45cm) despite the modest depths.

There is a little snow in the forecast this weekend and then again at times next week.



Signs of thin cover at low altitude in Zell-am-See - Photo: foto-webcam.eu

France

Snow depths are just about "correct" at altitude in the southern Alps, but otherwise still below normal for the middle of January. That said there is plenty of good skiing around thanks to recent snowfalls and relatively cold temperatures.

In the northern Alps, low-lying **Les Gets** (40/90cm) reports excellent on-piste conditions despite the modest base. In the southern Alps the snow is even fresher in **Orcières** (50/135cm), with powdery conditions both on and off piste.

A little snow is forecast this weekend across the northern Alps while the south should stay mostly dry.



plenty of good options in the Alps! tinyurl.com/llt6xzy



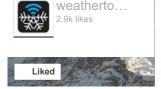
31 May



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Reasonable piste skiing around the Grand Massif today, though some lower runs are worn - Photo: lescarroz.com

Italy

Most Italian resorts have seen fresh snow over the last 24-48 hours, which means skiing conditions are generally good right now, even if snow depths remain below par at low altitude.

Some of the best skiing in the country can be found in high altitude **Cervinia** (90/220cm) and **Livigno** (65/170cm), both of which report powdery snow from top to bottom.

Elsewhere, **Sestriere** (50/80cm) in the far south-west and **Cortina** (35/125cm) in the far north-east are also in good shape, despite very variable off-piste.

The forecast allows for the odd light flurry over the weekend but no significant snow until later next week.



Fresh snow and great conditions in Cervinia today - Photo: cervinia.it

Switzerland

Snow depths are below average in all but a tiny portion of the southern Swiss Alps (Ticino and the extreme south of the Engadin). Like in other Alpine countries, however, that doesn't mean that skiing conditions aren't good. Yes, some of the lowest slopes are a bit worn and the off-piste remains variable but generally most resorts report excellent on-piste skiing.

Zermatt has 15/180cm of settled snow depending on altitude, while Klosters has 25/145cm. A little snow is expected over the weekend, mostly in the central and northern Swiss Alps.



Looking great in Villars this afternoon, but snow depths are still below where they should be for mid-

Rest of Europe

The Pyrenees continue their steady rather than spectacular season with light to moderate snowfalls earlier this week refreshing the pistes. **Arinsal** in Andorra has 45/75cm of settled snow depending on altitude, while **Barèges/La Mongie** in France has 70/110cm.

Bulgaria hasn't seen much snow in recent days but looks set to change tomorrow (Friday) with slight to moderate accumulations likely in most resorts. Currently **Borovets** has 85/95cm of snow packed down on its slopes.

Norway still offers some of the best conditions in Europe, with new snow in **Hemsedal** (95/100cm). There has also been a dusting of new snow for ${\bf \mathring{A}re}$ (40/48cm) in Sweden where conditions are also reported to be good, despite the more modest depths.

Scotland offered some memorable conditions earlier this week with a rare combination of deep snow and even deeper blue skies. Sadly the weather is closing in again with wind likely to hamper operations this weekend. Right now **Nevis Range** has 45/100cm of settled snow depending on altitude.



Decent piste skiing in the French Pyrenees today, though cover is still a bit thin low down. This is Font Romeu/Pyrénées 2000 - Photo: pyrenees2000.com

USA

Most Colorado resorts haven't seen a huge amount of snowfall in January, but bits and pieces have helped maintain good conditions. **Winter Park** saw 15cm on Wednesday - its upper base now 117cm deep and the skiing still excellent by most standards.

Jackson Hole (208cm upper base) in Wyoming and **Snowbird** (170cm midmountain base) in Utah are also in good shape, even if the off-piste is largely tracked out.

By contrast, Californian resorts continue to cry out for new snow. ${\bf Mammoth}$'s 51/102cm figures may sound ok, but much of this base is artificial and off-piste is very limited.

Canada

Whistler (159cm mid-mountain) has had a steady if unspectacular season to date but, with significant snow forecast on Friday, conditions should improve across the mountain.

Further inland, **Lake Louise** (107cm mid-mountain) is only expecting a dusting this weekend but, generally speaking, the slopes are still in excellent shape.



Fresh snow expected in Whistler on Friday - Photo: whistlerblackcomb.com

Next full snow report will be on Monday 26 January 2015, but see $\underline{\text{Today in the Alps}}$ for daily updates

