

Get a jump on skiing

By JEFF OLSON
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Sure there's snow and winter's early, but look at the bright side. At least we can go skiing.

In North Dakota, downhill skiers can use any slope or ski areas at Bottineau Winter Park, Frostfire Mountain at Walhalla and the Fort Ransom Ski Area.

Here's a rundown of some of the area's favorite ski spots:

■ Winter Park nine miles north and 1½ miles west of Bottineau opens Thursday. Ski hours are 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. Thursday through Sunday. Scott Pease, general manager, says the ski area will be open Dec. 19 through Jan. 6, except for Christmas Day.

Lift tickets are \$10 for adults and \$7 for children (13 and younger) on Thursdays and Fridays and \$12 for adults and \$8 for kids on Saturday and Sunday. Rental packages are \$9 for adults and \$6 for children each day. Snowboard rentals are also available.

Two Learn to Ski weekends are Dec. 7-8 and Dec. 14-15.

For ski conditions, call the lodge at 263-4556 or the ski hot line talking telephone book at 722-3000, access code 1515.

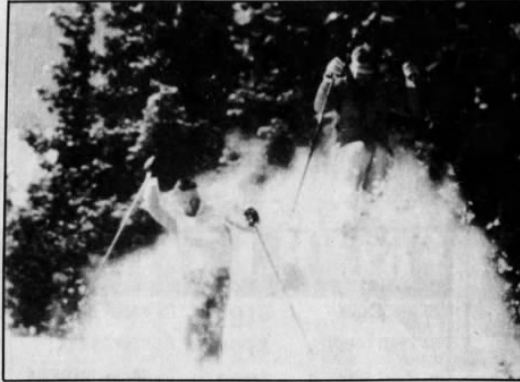
■ Frostfire Mountain six miles west of Walhalla on Pembina County No. 55, opens for business today.

Glide quietly 'cross country

While North Dakota boasts boisterous downhill areas, skiing in the state often means quiet gliding through tree-lined river bottoms or the local golf course.

This is particularly true in the Bismarck-Mandan area and the Missouri River corridor. Cross Ranch State Park, 29 miles north of Mandan, is already a hot spot with 10 miles of groomed trails.

There are more trails



Whether in state or out, skiing will help chase blues away.

"We're making snow and got 6 inches with the last storm. We have a 24-inch base on one run with 3 to 4 inches of new snow this week," says proprietor Richard Johnson.

Lift tickets are \$19 per day for adults and \$9.50 a day for children 12 and younger when all runs are open. Preschool children are admitted free. Rentals are \$13 per day for adults and \$8.50 per day for children. Group rates are available.

"It's kind of a weekend affair until mid-December," Johnson says. "Then we're open every day from 9:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m." For ski and snow conditions, call Frostfire Mountain at 549-3600.

■ The Lake Region Winter Sports Inc. area 10 miles south of Devils Lake on Highway 57 will open in December.

Lift tickets are \$10 per day for ages 12 and older and \$6 per day for youngsters. Season passes are available at \$100 for ages 12 and older and \$60 for under 12.

The area will be open Friday through Sunday from noon to 5 p.m. For ski and snow information, call the Devils Lake Area Chamber of Commerce at 662-4903.

■ Terry Peak near Lead, S.D., will open Nov. 23.

Lift tickets are \$25 per day for adults and \$18 for children 6 to 12

in all areas. Daily lift tickets for beginners are \$10 per adult and \$5 per child. The resort has ski rentals and lessons.

■ The Big Mountain, White Fish, Mont., ski area opens Nov. 28. The annual Pray for Snow party is Nov. 30.

Daily lift tickets are \$29 for adults, \$22 for ages 13-18 and 62 and older, and \$15 for ages 7-12. Lessons and rentals are available. For ski and snow information, call 406-862-3511 or 800-858-5439.

■ Big Sky, Mont., opens today.

Daily lift tickets are \$34 for adults and \$17 for ages 12 and younger. There are multi-day discounts, night skiing, lessons and rentals.

Call 406-995-4211 for information.

■ Bridger Bowl, Bozeman, Mont., opens Dec. 13.

Daily lift tickets are \$22 for adults, \$18 for ages 13-18 and \$10 for ages 12 and younger. Half-day rates are \$18. The resort has lessons, rentals, snowboard rentals, mountain tours, and daycare.

Call 406-586-2389 for snow information.

■ Red Lodge, Mont., opens Nov. 27. Daily lift tickets are \$22 for adults and \$10 for ages 12 and younger. Red Lodge has rentals, lessons, snowboard rentals and package rentals.

Swap Shop opens new snow season

The past four years, Christmas snow was an iffy situation, but just about right for the first Bismarck Area Ski Club road trip.

Considering the dumping of early snow, the Dec. 27-30 club outing in Bozeman, Mont., seems a long way off — maybe too far.

The annual Swap Shop is the first winter activity for club members. It's Dec. 7 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Kirkwood Mall.

All club trip prices include transportation, lodging and lift tickets. Here's what's planned:

■ Jan 30-Feb. 2: Showdown Ski Area, White Sulphur Springs, Mont., \$100.

■ Feb. 14-17: Big Sky/Bridger Bowl II, Bozeman, Mont., \$170.

■ March 1-6: Big Mountain, Whitefish, Mont., \$418.

■ March 5-12: Innsbruck, Austria, \$896.

■ March 12-15: Red Lodge, Mont., \$143.

■ March 18-23: Reno and Lake Tahoe, Nev., \$515.

■ March 27-29: Red Lodge, Mont. II, \$111.

Ski club off to Alps

The Bismarck Area Ski Club has a big blast planned for the ski season — skiing in the Austrian Alps. "Really, we're going," says Carrie Wade, the club's vice president. "There are already 42 of us signed up."

Wade says club members "wanted to do something really big and this is it."

The March 5-12 excursion is round trip from Bismarck. "We've got people going who don't even ski and people from Fargo and Minneapolis who are getting on along the way," Wade says.

The package price, \$896 per person, includes round-trip air fare on Northwest and KLM Dutch Airlines, six nights' lodging double occupancy at Innsbruck, round-trip ground transfers, a daily breakfast buffet and an English speaking trip representative.