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Skiers race to (a few) slopes to start state's ski season

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

At least five of Michigan's 55 downhill ski areas plan weekend operations, but skiers should call ahead to ensure slopes will be open, the Auto Club of Michigan reports.

Southeastern Michigan — Pine Knob near Clarkston, Mount Brighton near Brighton and Alpine Valley near Milford hope to open by this weekend if conditions permit.

Western Michigan - Crystal Mountain near Thompsonville, 2-12, groomed; Caberfae near Cadillac and Sugar Loaf and Traverse City Holiday both near Traverse City may open this weekend if weather permits.

Upper Peninsula – Indianhead Mountain near Wakefield, 2-14, groomed; **Ski Brule** near Iron River, 9-20, groomed, opens Saturday; and **Ski Homestead** near Iron River, 9-20, groomed, opens Saturday; **Pine Mountain** near Iron Mountain, opens Sunday; **Briar Mountain** near Vulcan, may open this weekend if conditions permit.

Michigan Ski Report

Local Notes

Ski club

The Ann Arbor Ski Club will meet at 8 p.m. tonight in Schwaben Hall, 217 S. Ashley. All those 21 or over, interested in cross-country or downhill skiing, are invited. Club meets every other Thursday. For information, call Jim Hart at 971-6649.

RAP program doing its job, say conservation officers

By John Block
BOOTH NEWS SERVICE

KALAMAZOO — A shaft of light flicked on, piercing the blackness of a country field in the northwestern portion of Kalamazoo County.

Veteran Conservation Officer Gene York started his car and took off in pursuit of another deer shiner.

"Sometimes you come up on them when you're driving around and other times you pick an area where you know shiners are operating and wait for them to come to you," York says.

Poaching is becoming a serious problem around here, York says. In one recent two-week period, Conservation Officers operating out of the Plainwell district made nine poaching arrests.

A recent survey conducted by researchers at Michigan State University showed that Michigan Conservation Officers deal with 65 percent more hunters and 21 percent more fishermen than conservation officers on a national average.

"A large majority of the arrests stem from RAP (Report All Poaching) complaints," says

"I once arrested a man and his son for shooting a deer with a .22 rifle. I later found nine butchered deer, all nicely wrapped, in their freezer. There's no doubt in my mind they were selling the meat."

"We try to take the violators by surprise," says Schmeler, "but that doesn't always work."

The officer in the plane usually spots the violators and then "talks" ground officers to the suspect vehicle, which the plane follows.

When it's apparent they are going to be caught, most poachers surrender easily, although some try to outrun the officers and there have been occasions of violence.

"The threat of violence is always there," says Schmeler, "but it doesn't happen often because the violators are usually outnumbered. We have had instances of violence, but they are

Schmeler says. "But a search turned up the partially cooked venison."

Schmeler said his officers work closely with other police agencies, primarily the state police and sheriff's departments. "They help us, and we in turn come to their assistance when called upon," the Plainwell boss says.

York says he once apprehended a poacher with five deer carcasses in the bed of his pickup. "I was cruising one night when a poacher shot at a deer from his vehicle right in front of me," York recounted.

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Your 1982 Guide to Michigan's 55 Downhill Skiing Areas

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