

Sun Peaks Trip Article

February 13-20, 2016

The TSC Winter Shootout trip to Sun Peaks British Columbia began Saturday 13 February and concluded on Saturday 22 February. As no group travel had been arranged for our participants, our Clear Lake Area Ski Club folks arrived at different destination airports and at different times. Some flew to Kamloops, some to Kelowna and some to Seattle. Some arrived Thursday, some Friday, and the rest Saturday. Some used scheduled or private shuttles for ground transfer and others obtained rental cars. But by Saturday evening, all had arrived and were settled in to their rooms in the wonderful Sun Peaks Grand Hotel.

Although traveling to this place is a bit of a chore, once here it is a terrific resort. The base of the Sun Peaks resort resembles a small alpine village. Everything one would need was very handy. There were several places to rent equipment within steps of the hotel lobby. Once equipped, one can just step out of the hotel, strap on skis and be off and just as easily return later on. Within just a few minutes' walk are plenty of comfortable après ski spots, great restaurants and shops. The ski area is spread out over three different mountains ... so during the week we never really ran out of new trails to try. There were lots of trails for skiers of any ability. There was also lots of great tree skiing for the better folks. At this resort there were also plenty of other activities to try. Another convenient feature is the relatively low altitude of this resort: the base is at about 4000 feet and the summit around 7000 feet.

There were only three TSC clubs that participated in this trip: CLASC, Space City, and Club St. Bernard from San Antonio. Our club group of 17 participants, which included five folks that are also members of the Armadillo Ski Club, represented about half of the total TSC group. The low turnout was blamed on the relatively high cost of traveling to this location. However, I can report that the quality of this resort was easily worth the travel trouble getting there.

The skiing was terrific. Driving up to resort, we did not see snow until we were nearly there ... but on the mountain, there was plenty of snow. We mostly had fabulous powder and packed powder conditions all week. Plus it snowed several times during our visit which provided us fresh tracks conditions. The temperatures during our visit were quite comfortable ... some days almost bordering on warm ... but this fortunately did not impact the snow conditions much.

On Monday evening many from our group participated in an optional activity that started with a ride up the chairlift to a mid-mountain lodge after the hill had closed for the day. There we enjoyed a European style fondue dinner. After, we strapped on lights and skied back down the mountain at night on a wide green trail. This was terrific fun

On Tuesday that week, the CLASC racers had what were probably the best race results ever, both in club and individual races. Although admittedly, this performance was influenced by there being only a small group participating in this trip. On race day, there was some fresh snow on the course. Although fairly easy, the course was not well prepared and there were some safety concerns. This was resolved by having the racers side-slip the course and by allowing folks to take an easy practice run which put the

two courses in great shape for racing. The mountain staff ran a great set of races, although they were not NASTAR certified so there were no gold/silver/bronze medals. That evening, our club dinner had been arranged at a wonderful restaurant called the Voyage Bistro. Here, our entire group was set up altogether at two large adjoining tables where we all had a terrific meal.

CLASC racers had fabulous results in the individual races. In the women's 60-69 division, Brenda Herman took first place. CLASC women swept the women's 50-59 division with Gayle Brown first, Laura Kinney second and Ruth Bauman third. In the men's over 70 division, Terry O'Neel took second place. In the men's 60-69 division, Dan Willett took first and Jeff Wright second. In the men's 35-49 division, Reagan Geeseman took first and Keith Zimmerman second.

While here, our group participants tried several other optional activities. Some went out one day to try dog sledding. Another group went snow shoeing, including an evening outing that concluded with roasting marshmallows by a fire. One of our group even tried an evening ride-along on a snow cat to watch how the slopes get groomed at night.

On Friday, the hotel set up a fine final dinner for the TSC group in one of their ballrooms. There was the usual presentation of the TSC race results followed by the meal. In group race results, every club came in first in their division. This was because of the three clubs present, one was from each of the three TSC race divisions. A special treat during the evening was a visit by Canadian former Olympic Gold Medalist, former World Cup Champion and Canadian Senator from British Columbia, Nancy Greene and her husband Alan Raine (who is also the mayor of Sun Peaks). Many participants had an opportunity to chat with this Canadian hero.

All had to get up fairly early on the morning of Saturday the 20th to catch their ground transportation to start their travel home. This was a fabulous trip overall. We were fortunate that there were no serious injuries, and it appeared that everyone had a wonderful time. I know I would definitely return to this resort.

Check out the photo set: <https://goo.gl/photos/6qxPg7KFNVisRieE8>

Dan Willett, Trip Leader