

Jackson Hole

Feb 25-Mar 4

If we're getting up at o-dark-thirty it better be for a great ski trip!

So, most of the 28 of us from the Jacksonville Ski Club (JSC) were destined to be at the airport at 5:30 in order to head to Houston and then to Jackson, Wyoming so we could join forces with some additional 230 members from 7 other Florida Ski Council (FSC) Clubs for a superb week of on-slope and off-slope fun at a world class resort. Our layover in Houston delayed us about 2 hours because of stormy weather delays in the middle of the country, but with such an early departure we still arrived about 2 PM in Jackson. With a short 20-minute ride to our hotel, that left ample time to secure equipment rental from an easily walkable shop.

The 49er Inn, in downtown Jackson, is the hotel that we and some other clubs called home for the next week. They provided the normal hotel accommodations for us, but they also provided a great, hot breakfast spread every morning to fuel the athletes in all of us. With an indoor heated pool, hot tub and fitness facility, they also let us down softly at the end of the day.

First on the agenda was to meet and greet everyone, and that was done with our own Jax Ski Club Pizza Party with goods from the town's best pizzeria, Pinky G's. With Jackson Hole Mountain Reps joining us they shared the news of the great snow year that was happening here (over 360 inches to date) and the teasing of other Rocky Mountain Resorts that weren't so lucky this year. (Lucky for Us!) The weekly logistics were discussed and lift tickets were handed out. One of the logistics that was welcomed was the availability of a direct ski bus to/from the mountain at designated times in the AM and PM, as well as city buses at other times.

Monday morning, snow is falling...let the fun begin. Take your choice of a two-hour mountain tour, a Ski Council discounted all day group lesson, or just embrace the mountain. Maybe even travel to the top of the mountain in the 100-passenger tram. Don't worry about your appetite, as Monday night brought the Florida Ski Council Welcome Party with a delicious BBQ themed buffet at the nearby Snow King Resort for all 260 of our Florida ski friends. A DJ provided music for dancing afterward.

Now that everyone is comfortable, let's bring Tuesday, or as FSC calls it, "Crazy Hat and Boxer Shorts Day". Some went on a mountain tour, the brave volunteered for a fun race to represent the club. With snow again falling, there was no bad choice. Yes, the fun race did indeed sound fun, but each early racer exceeded their allotted time through no fault of their own...and it was snowing. So our racers, did we say it was snowing, nobly sacrificed for others and bowed out so they could, we don't know, play in the new snow. That brings us to a great Western lunch at the base of the mountain sponsored by the FSC at a place called Mangy Moose, followed by a group photo. And if this day wasn't crazy enough, the evening brought more with an outdoor Cowboy Roller Coaster Ride and for those who dared, a local Pub Crawl.

Wednesday, Hump Day, offered more choices, and in hindsight was the one and only sunny, bluebird day. FSC sponsored a trip to a fantastic nearby, but less traveled to mountain, Grand Targhee. Even though it was an hour away some 9 JSC travelers chose to go. Another 8 chose to stay locally and spend the day doing a local wildlife tour of the famous Elk Preserve and other nearby wildlife sites. No wrong choices this day, smiles all the way around!

Thursday, more snow, more vertical, more left turns, more right turns. Repeat the above, but we had to save something for that night's Wild, Wild West Theme Party, the second FSC evening banquet, again at the Snow King. Some costumes were moderate, some outlandish and the photo props complemented them all. Another delicious buffet followed, by music and dancing.

It's Friday, and guess what, more snow. By now we should know our way around the mountain, and we sort of did, but another day just reinforced how big this mountain is horizontally and vertically. In addition, on this day, we didn't want to be late for dinner. This dinner was sponsored by the JSC for our own members and it required a short bus ride to the Rendezvous Bistro. We had a side room set aside for us so we could socialize, laugh and share stories which we did until the main course came and then the room turned mysteriously quiet. Talking voices were replaced with humming. Yes, the food was that good!

Hey, it's Saturday, and guess what? It's snowing again. Over the week some 30 inches of fresh pow blessed us. What's not to like? Try going home and leaving this. As this day was winding down, we all started to pack and give our thanks to the outstanding locals who served us well during the week.

Sunday at 10:15 we loaded the bus for the airport, pretended we were happy and hopped on our flights to Houston and home. Landing in Jacksonville around 11 PM the weary travelers headed home with good memories and good photos.

Trip Leader: Ashley Dopf

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