

Local & Region

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RAPTOR COURSE DOWNHILL AND SUPER-G

STACEY COOK, of Mammoth, California, has three World Cup podiums and 21 top 10s in her career. She finished 19th in the 2013 test event in Beaver Creek. See **STACEY COOK** below for her take on the Raptor downhill course.



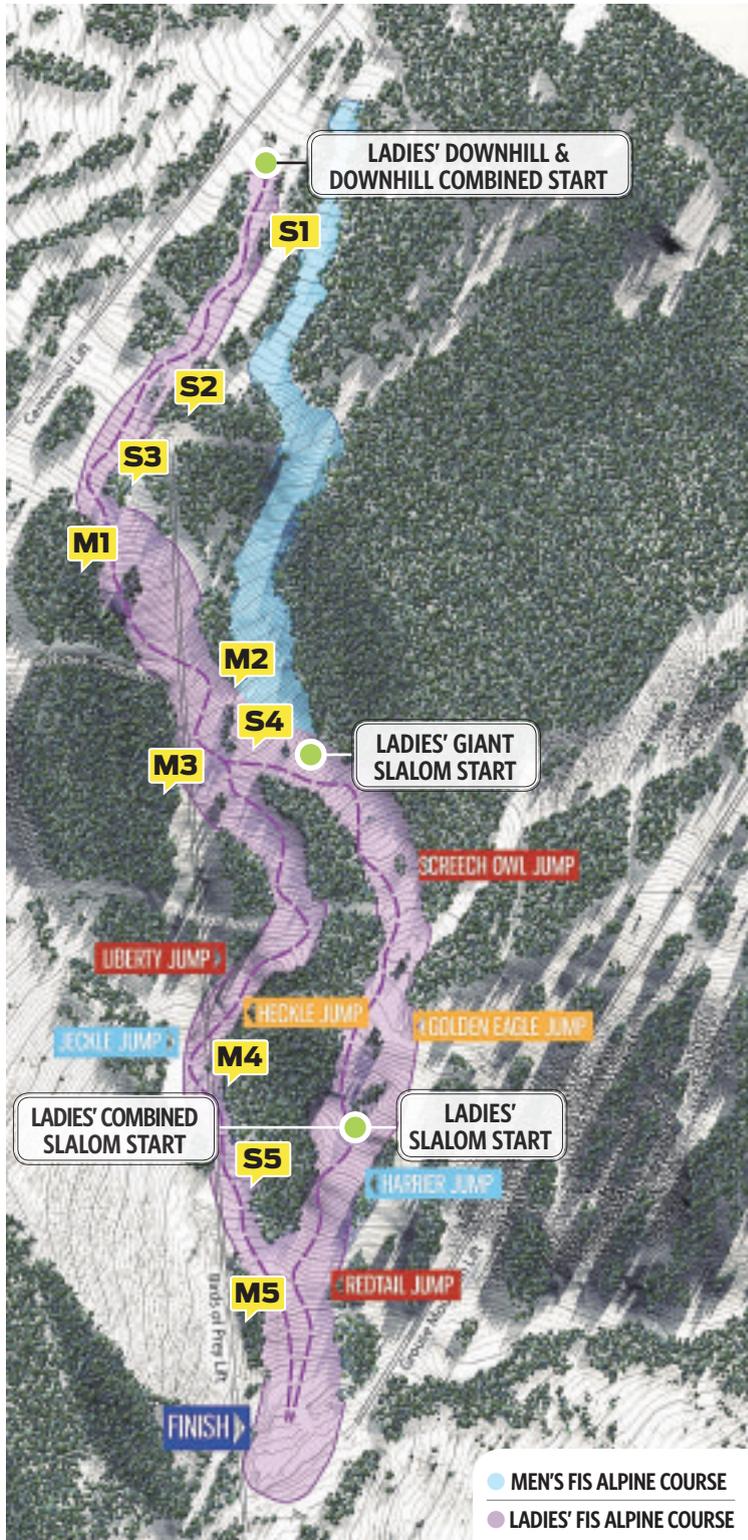
(S1) "Right out of the start they build a big old ramp at the very top, and the start goes onto a flat. You're looking at it, you're not expecting much, but last year the race was actually won or lost on that flat. If you lost time there, there wasn't much chance to come back from it."

(S2) "While you're going through that flat, in the back of your mind that whole time is the pitch coming up, you're scared, you're waiting for it, you're like, 'I know it's coming, I know it's coming.'"

(S3) "Once you get past that tree island, it's game on. It gets super steep, super fast and the turns almost become unarcable because of how steep and fast it is in there."

(S4) "You get a right footer and you catch a little bit of air off of it, and then you drop into this huge compression turn, which is one of the most intimidating turns I've ever seen on a course in my life. It's super narrow, it's huge forces right up in your face and it takes as much guts as it does skill to get through it."

(S5) "I think the next flat, coming on to the finish, is one of the most fun sections of the course, because it's in the shade, it's bumpy, it's gnarly, you're in your tuck, you're looking for every last hundredth you possibly can, and then you have this last jump and the finish line."



MIKAELA SHIFFRIN

is quickly becoming an authority on the Raptor, which is just a few miles from her Eagle-Vail home. She's hit the podium there in the GS, and she's trained extensively on Raptor during spring sessions. "The Raptor course is amazing," Shiffrin said. "It's a really tough hill, probably one of the toughest the women ski. From the starting gate you have to have the mindset that you're going to attack to the very finish." Following are her insights on the course.

(M1) "The first three gates are kind of like a slow breakover onto the pitch."

(M2) "Then, for the next 15 gates, it's terrain. And it's steep. And then there's this huge, left-footed compression turn, and if you screw it up, you're in the fencing in half a second."

(M3) "Then you're kind of like, 'OK, that's the tough part of the course,' and then the right footer is this huge turn where, it's almost like a GS turn, you have to pull off this incredible radius to get back down into the fall line."

(M4) "Then it's a few big, swifty turns that aren't too difficult, but you can't back off at all, because if you do, then you'll end up flying off the mountain again."

(M5) Once at the Red Tail jump, Shiffrin says, "Land it, hopefully. And make it to the finish."



OUR PICKS FOR THE TOP TWO ACTIVITIES IN THE VAIL VALLEY TODAY

1 See Paul Oakenfold Vail Mountain welcomes back three-time Grammy nominee, DJ, producer and artist Paul Oakenfold for his second Decimo event at the top of Gondola One tonight starting at 9 p.m. Doors for all Decimo events open at 9 p.m. For information on Decimo events for the 2014-15 winter season, FAQs and ticketing or VIP package details, call 970-754-2466 or visit www.DecimoVail.com.

2 Check out the Walking Mountains Science Center's High County Speaker Series In a talk entitled "Developing Deep Roots for Sustainability and Community in Nepal," Jim Nowak, founder of the dZi Foundation, will present on his personal experiences working with indigenous populations in remote regions of the Himalayas. The talk is free and starts at 5:30 p.m. at the Walking Mountains Science Center, located at 318 Walking Mountains Lane. For more information, call 970-827-9725 or visit walkingmountains.org.

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