



Mountain Managers Report 2020.

2020 Season Summary. ' A season not soon forgotten'
Covid - 19.

A decision to delay opening and snow making was made. In the main. This decision was made due to how far the lockdown put us behind, and the uncertainty that excised coming out of this time. A lot of consideration was given to working out how to safety run Rainbow, and what the public attendance could have been. We had to rehire many of our staff, as a considerable percentage of them were living internationally. It was believed starting the season later would put us in the best position to open reliably.

At that time, we were still unsure if our operation would be allowed to run at Level 2. Protecting the club for future years was the foremost priority. A lot of the decisions made, focused on minimizing risk in uncertain circumstances.

High Pressure, rain, and little snow. Warmest and driest winter on record according to NIWA. Preseason there were a couple of storms producing between 15-20cm. We had a good two-week window of snowmaking, which allowed us to get a solid base from tower 4 down. As we moved into August, the high-pressure system to end all high-pressure systems moved in. Approximately 3 weeks of warm, clear days. These warm temperatures prevented efficient snowmaking higher up. Post the great high, some storms started to roll in. They came with very little energy. Without good uplift, what we often received was rain. I'll be happy to never see another straight Northerly again. Every attempt and trick to prolong our snowpack was made. Unfortunately, this was not enough to prevent two indefinite closures. We reopened whenever possible. This often involved rebuilding much of the ski field with the groomer each time and reassembling the staff. We closed for the season one week before our scheduled closure. 24 days of operation was achieved.

A number of changes were made to try and protect the club. The major change was choosing to close two days a week. This allowed us to significantly cut our staff costs, as we could operate on one roster. Staff wages are our biggest outgoing. This also made completing our hiring process with limited applicants more achievable.

When to open, and when to close. This was my toughest daily decision. Due to lack of snow, we were at times working with 15cm or less on open terrain, as well as often steering down the barrel of another warm front. At times a decision was made to close, normally mid-week. This was to try and conserve the snowpack into the later part of the week, and weekend. A lot of time was spent on shovels by the staff and members to keep runs just open.

Staff. They were amazing. Considering we had to stand down the staff, more days than not, it was incredible that 95% of them stayed to the end. Twice we internally had to shut the field indefinitely and tell the staff there would be no future work until snow arrived. We were lucky to get some government support to help keep people at a point where they could pay rent, buy groceries.

Maintenance and mechanical failures. Mechanically we had few failures. The beginner lift gearbox required a rebuild mid-season. The platter rope required a resplice after it was installed incorrectly by a contractor. Most other mechanical plant are part way through services cycles due to such limited use. Apart from one snowmobile, all other plant was operational at the end of 2020.

End of season – From the end of September to the start of November. A concession application was made to DoC. The completion of this and field tear down filled my time. Over summer no work was completed on the hill as I was employment elsewhere.

Thomas Harry

Mountain Manager