



WARNING: Olympian Ronald Duncan, pictured in action, top, whose father Jack was among the early pioneers of the Glenshee ski centre, above.

Decision awaited on World Cup pub licensing

A decision is yet to be taken on whether Fife pubs will be allowed to stay open late to screen Scotland's World Cup fixtures.

Steve Clarke's men will head to the USA in June, with their opening fixture against Haiti kicking off at 2am UK time on the 14th.

Group games against Morocco and Brazil will then follow on June 19 and 24, with kick-off times at 11pm.

While Fife Licensing Board is still to make a decision as to what changes will be made to accommodate fans wanting to enjoy a pint in a pub or fanzone while watching Scotland, the matter came under the spotlight at its meeting yesterday.

Sergeant Neil Ewing from Police Scotland said decisions would need to be taken in the coming months.

He told board members: "We are currently waiting on word from the Scottish Government on whether they are going to issue statutory guidance.

"At the moment we don't know if they are going to issue guidance.

"It could be dealt with by the board issuing general extensions. That could be to all premises, specific types of premises, for the whole duration or for certain games or by extended hours applications for current licenced applicants or a combination of all of this."

He said football fans were also likely to watch games involving the home nations, with England qualified and Wales, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland still with the possibility of qualification through play-offs.

"There is a lot to be considered between now and the end of April when this is going to have to take place," he continued.

'Inconsistent snow' puts Winter Olympics at risk

BY MICHAEL ALEXANDER

A Dundee-born Winter Olympian has warned the future of skiing - including the Winter Olympics - is under serious threat from climate change.

Ronald Duncan, 63, who represented Team GB at the 1988 and 1992 Winter Olympics, said the sport was now so dependent on artificial snowmaking that elite competition would be impossible across much of Europe without it.

The downhill skier's warning came as Scotland's largest ski centre enjoyed one of its best snowfalls in recent years after prolonged periods of uncertainty, cancelled lift days and increasingly unreliable winters.

"Glenshee looks great just now," Mr Duncan said.

"However, that doesn't mean the problem has gone away - we still get good snow but what we've lost is consistency.

"Without consistency, winter sport doesn't work."

Mr Duncan grew up in Dundee and learned to ski at Glenshee, at a time when heavy snow was a routine feature of Scottish winters.

A former Strathallan School pupil, access to the hills helped him on his way to become the 1980 and 1983 British Men's Downhill Champion and Men's Super-G Champion in 1991.

But he said those conditions were no longer reliable, and warned recent snowfall should not be mistaken for recovery.

On the eve of the 2026 Winter Olympics, he said the games themselves were increasingly dependent on industrial-scale snowmaking to remain viable.

And he warned that, in future, the Winter Olympics might only be possible by putting a giant refrigerated dome over mountains.

He added: "The Winter Olympics now only exist because we manufacture winter - that's the reality."

The Milan-Cortina Winter Olympics, which open on Friday, will rely on millions of cubic metres of artificial snow as freezing days continue to decline across the Italian Alps.

A 2024 study found all 19 Winter Olympic host cities since the 1950s had warmed by an average of 2.7°C, while analysis by Climate Central showed Cortina's average February snow depth had declined by around 15cm since the early 1970s.

Snowmaking has kept competitive skiing viable for more than three decades, but Mr Duncan said it was becoming more difficult and expensive as temperatures rise.

He pointed to the 1976 Winter Olympics in Innsbruck, when Austria's army was forced to

transport snow from mountain passes to prevent the games being cancelled.

By the time he was competing internationally, snowmaking had already become essential in many European resorts, particularly in Italy's Dolomites.

He said: "Racing didn't really return to Cortina until the early 1990s and that was 100% due to snowmaking.

"I raced at Val Gardena before they had it and there was barely enough snow to hold a race.

"Once snowmaking came in, it transformed the sport."

However, he warned that snowmaking only worked when temperatures remained low enough and that warming winters were beginning to undermine even that safety net.

Mr Duncan said the impact of climate change

on skiing became impossible to ignore after he retired from competition in 1993.

That December, he visited the Kitzsteinhorn glacier above Kaprun in Austria, rising to around 3,000 metres. Just three years earlier, he had skied there in June in falling powder snow.

"When I went back, the glacier had melted dramatically and it was raining all the way to the top," he said.

"That was when it really hit me how serious this was."

The economic consequences are already being felt across Europe, he added.

In the 1990s, installing a single ski lift cost around £1 million.

Today, resorts require tens of millions of pounds of infrastructure, much of it dedicated to snowmaking.