

Tahoe's Sullivan takes 12th in downhill

By Tom Kelly, USSA

VAL GARDENA, Italy – The men's speed team continued the U.S. Ski Team streak of packing the points Saturday as Bode Miller (Franconia, NH) led five Americans into the Audi FIS Alpine World Cup top 24 at the famed Saslong Classic downhill. Just one year ago, the U.S. placed five racers in the top 10 and seven in the top 30.

"I skied well," said Miller, who captured his fifth top 10 of the young season. "I didn't have any errors. I took some risks. It's tough to take risks on this course, because risk doesn't necessarily make you win, but a lot of times it makes a couple of little mistakes that make you lose."



Squaw's Marco Sullivan is interviewed Saturday after his race.

Photo/Doug Haney

Charging into a temporary headwind, the seven-time World Cup downhill winner fell a half second behind the pace of winner Manuel Osborne Paradis of Canada at the first interval, but Miller held his form throughout the bumpy, winding Saslong

course for a finish just 0.77 back.

Marco Sullivan (Squaw Valley, CA) charged to an early lead as the fifth racer on the course, laying down a 2:02.16 that eventually landed him 12th to follow last-year's fourth-place result in the luminescent haze that covered the course.

"For the early guys, you get sun on the top, and the later guys get sun down in the ciaslat, so it's kind of a trade-off," Sullivan said.

Despite a return to snow little more than a month ago, Steven Nyman (Sundance, UT) scored 18th place for the U.S., with Erik Fisher (Middleton, ID) .12 seconds behind in 19th.

The World Cup circuit stays in Italy in Sunday's giant slalom and Monday's slalom in Alta Badia, Italy.

Ted Ligety will return to action trying to improve on last year's fourth-place finish.

Val Gardena, Italy " Dec. 19. Men's Downhill

1. Manuel Osborne-Paradis, Canada, 2:01.27
2. Mario Scheiber, Austria, 2:01.40
- 3T. Ambrosi Hoffmann, Switzerland, 2:01:52
- 3T. Johan Clarey, France, 2:01.52
5. Michael Walchhofer, Austria, 2:01.75
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9. Bode Miller, Franconia, NH, 2:02.04
12. Marco Sullivan, Squaw Valley, CA, 2:02.16
18. Steven Nyman, Sundance, UT, 2:02.55
19. Erik Fisher, Middleton, ID, 2:02.67

23. Scott Macartney, Crystal Mountain, WA, 2:02.67

24T. Andrew Weibrecht, Lake Placid, NY, 2:03.10

49T. Jeremy Transue, Hunter, NY, 2:05.30