

Mancuso 1 of 7 U.S. women to score in downhill

By USSA

ST. MORITZ, Switzerland -â€ Lindsey Vonn (Vail, CO) held on for a solid fifth place after a costly mistake in Saturday's Audi FIS Alpine World Cup downhill, leading an impressive U.S. Team effort that saw seven Americans finish in the points.

Germany's Maria Riesch won the race, narrowing Vonn's overall lead to 61 points after the two-time defending champion was bounced on a hole that had developed above a hard left boot sidehill turn and got sucked low.

"We were aware of it and we'd discussed it over the radio, but a number of racers still had trouble in that spot," said U.S. Women's Head Coach Jim Tracy.

"I'm pretty disappointed with my result," Vonn said. "It was just really unfortunate. I knew the hole was there. I'd gotten it from the coaches and from Thomas (Vonn, her husband). But when I was on course, the light was so flat, I couldn't see anything.

"My ski just hit it at the exact wrong place, the exact wrong time," she said. "I'm lucky, honestly, to have made the course. I was pretty close to going out there."

Tracy said he was pleased she held on to boost her discipline lead to 126 points, but chagrined she couldn't nab her first downhill win at St. Moritz.

On a banner day for American women, Alice McKennis (Glenwood Springs, CO) earned the best result of her young career, taking ninth.

"She took advantage of her start number (3)," Tracy said. "We

thought it was going to be tough early because the forecast called for wind and snow, but there was none really. It was impressive to see a couple of the girls step up.”

Close behind was Chelsea Marshall (Pittsfield, VT) in 10th, her second ever top 10 (8th in Sestriere, Italy, in 2008).

Stacey Cook (Mammoth Mountain, CA) landed in the points for her eighth consecutive World Cup downhill, taking 12th.

“All of them did a great job,” Tracy said. “They’re capable of finishing in the points every race, so to see them put it together is great.”

As if four in the top 12 weren’t enough, Leanne Smith (Conway, NH) was 18th, Julia Mancuso (Olympic Valley, CA) was 22nd, and Laurenne Ross (Klamath Falls, OR) got her first World Cup points in 28th.

Sunday’s super G is the final World Cup race before the Olympics.

St. Moritz, Switzerland, Jan. 30, Women’s Downhill

1. Maria Riesch, Germany, 1:41.31
2. Ingrid Jacquemod, France, 1:42.10
3. Fabienne Suter, Switzerland, 1:42.27
4. Anja Paerson, Sweden, 1:42.28
5. Lindsey Vonn, Vail, CO, 1:42.52
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9. Alice McKennis, Glenwood Springs, CO, 1:42.90
10. Chelsea Marshall, Pittsfield, VT, 1:43.05
12. Stacey Cook, Mammoth Mountain, CA, 1:43.17

18. Leanne Smith, Conway, NH, 1:43.50
22. Julia Mancuso, Olympic Valley, CA, 1:43.78
28. Laurenne Ross, Klamath Falls, OR, 1:44.23
36. Kaylin Richardson, Edina, MN, 1:44.87
44. Keely Kelleher, Big Sky, MT, 1:46.56