

Mancuso out of medal contention in super G



By Matthew Piper, USSA

WHISTLER, British Columbia – It wasn't another gold, but Lindsey Vonn (Vail, CO) earned her second Olympic medal with a gutsy bronze in Saturday's super G. Austria's Andrea Fischbacher sped down in the day's fastest time, while Slovenia's Tina Maze edged out Vonn for the silver.

Vonn, who has already clinched the 2010 World Cup super G discipline title with two races remaining, raced from the 17th spot and cruised to more than a half-second advantage over the field. She lost critical tenths on the bottom section, however, and Fischbacher held onto a more aggressive line two spots later for a .74-second lead.

"When I came down to the finish and saw No. 1 next to my name, I thought 'Hopefully, this is another gold medal,'" she said. "Obviously, that wasn't the case, but I did my best, and I'm definitely very, very proud of another Olympic medal.

Vonn, who won gold in the World Championship downhill and super G a year ago, came into Vancouver with hopes for a medal and now has downhill gold and super G bronze.

"I'm a double Olympic medalist, and that's a pretty cool thing to be able to say, she said. "I obviously would have loved to have a gold medal today, but Olympic medals are never very easy to come by."

Julia Mancuso (Olympic Valley, CA) for a while seemed poised to collect her third medal of these Games after storming out

of the gate first for a lead that held through 12 skiers until Germany's Maria Reisch beat her out by .04 seconds.

Mancuso lost time on a tricky corner in the Frog Bank. In Wednesday's downhill (where she won silver), the banking of the hill carried racers through the turn, and Mancuso brought too much speed into the section.

"It surprised me a lot," she said. "I thought it would be similar to the downhill, where the bank would take you around. But the bank didn't take you around, it compressed you so it shot you on your tails."

She somehow stayed on her feet through a sweeping left turn in the backseat, but Mancuso got sucked low and lost time. Still, despite that mistake, flat light, and a challenging start position, she finished just 0.62 seconds out of the medals.

"I felt my run was strong," Mancuso said. "It was that mistake. Without that mistake, I think I would have been in there, even without the light."

"When I watched Maria's run and she beat me by four-hundredths, I was bummed. But she beat me by a second in the section I made my mistake."

Nonetheless, Mancuso owns the most medals ever by a U.S. woman after adding silvers in downhill and super combined to her giant slalom gold in Torino.

"I have nothing to lose," she said. "I'm really, really proud of my Olympic career so far — a gold and two silvers. I'm not going into the GS ranked the best, but I've been training well and skiing really well. And I'm excited to go in there and give my best."

Leanne Smith (Conway, NH) was 18th for a solid finish in her first Olympic super G, while Chelsea Marshall's (Pittsfield, VT) Games debut ended suddenly when she took out a gate in the

challenging Frog Bank and did not finish.

Mancuso and Vonn will try to add to the U.S. Alpine Ski Team's medal count when they take back to Franz's Run for the giant slalom on Wednesday.

"I don't have any regrets on any of my races here," Vonn said. "I definitely gave it everything I had every day. Especially on super G, it's difficult. If you look back, you can always find places where you could have made up time, but having only one inspection and no training runs, it's difficult to always know how aggressive you can ski and how the line is going to run and what the speed is going to be. Given the circumstances – a lot of girls had trouble today – and given everything, I think today was a really solid result."

2010 Winter Olympic Games, Feb. 20, Women's Super G

Gold – Andrea Fischbacher, Austria, 1:20.14

Silver – Tina Maze, Slovenia, 1:20.63

Bronze – Lindsey Vonn, Vail, CO, 1:20.88

4. Johanna Schnarf, Italy, 1:20.99

5. Elisabeth Goergl, Austria, 1:21.14

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9. Julia Mancuso, Olympic Valley, CA, 1:21.50

18. Leanne Smith, Conway, NH, 1:23.05

DNF – Chelsea Marshall, Pittsfield, VT