

3 American men in top 20 in World Cup downhill

By Elizabeth Karam, U.S. Ski Team

BORMIO, Italy -- Bode Miller of Franconia, N.H., led a U.S. trio into the top 20 with eighth in Wednesday's Audi FIS Alpine World Cup downhill in Bormio. Steven Nyman of Sundance, Utah, finished 11th and World Cup rookie Travis Ganong of Squaw Valley was 20th, while Austria's Michael Walchhofer clinched the victory.

Known amongst the racers as one of the most strenuous, if not the most strenuous course on the World Cup circuit, the U.S. was up to the challenge. Nyman scored his best World Cup result since Val Gardena in 2008, while Ganong raced to a career best finish and first World Cup downhill points.

Despite having teammate Marco Sullivan of Squaw Valley injured in Tuesday's downhill training, Miller, Nyman and Ganong showed their focus and strength on race day. Erik Fisher of Idaho and Andrew Weibrecht of Lake Placid were also on the injured reserve list with injuries sustained prior to Bormio.

Bormio first-timer Ganong admitted Bormio was the stop about which he was most nervous all season.

"This hill is crazy. It's a real deal downhill, bumpy, fast, icy and dark. It's just tough skiing from top to bottom and I came through today," said Ganong. "In my mind this is the toughest hill, but it turns out I really like it. It's really turny and suits my more technical style."

The U.S. Alpine Ski Team's speed crew will return stateside for a break before heading back to Europe for the second half of the World Cup circuit. Part two will kick off with the famed Lauberhorn races at Wengen, Switzerland, Jan. 11-14.

The next stop on the World Cup tour is Munich Jan. 2, where World Cup giant slalom leader Ted Ligety of Park City will be representing the U.S. in the parallel slalom city event.

Audi FIS Alpine World Cup, Bormio, Italy, Dec. 29, Downhill

1. Michael Walchhofer, Austria, 1:59.66
2. Silvan Zurbriggen, Switzerland, 1:59.74
3. Christof Innerhofer, Italy, 2:00.02
4. Patrick Kueng, Switzerland, 2:00.26
5. Georg Streitberger, 2:00.62
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8. Bode Miller, Franconia, NH, 2:00.92
11. Steven Nyman, Sundance, UT, 2:01.31
20. Travis Ganong, Squaw Valley, CA, 2:01.93