

Mancuso 8th in downhill; Vonn on the podium

By Elizabeth Karam, U.S. Ski Team

VAL d'ISERE, France – Olympic gold medalist Lindsey Vonn of Vail captured a stunning victory Saturday to regain the Audi FIS Alpine World Cup downhill standings lead as German Maria Riesch finished 24th. Teammate Julia Mancuso of Squaw Valley was 8th with five Americans finishing inside the top 30.

“I’m really psyched to have the red bib back. It means a lot,” said Vonn, who won the 2009 downhill World Championship on the nearby Solaise slope in Val d’Isere. “I hope that I can keep skiing well and hang onto the bib until the end of the year. Downhill is my favorite event.”

Vonn and Mancuso, debuting personally designed Spyder speed suits, kicked out of the start under bluebird skies and with single digit temperatures as the field’s covered faces dropped into their tucks for the Audi FIS Alpine World Cup downhill.

Vonn started 20th, making an incredible save after nearly crashing on the turn just below the second jump. She kept her cool, arriving in the finish arena with a time of 1:51.42 – 0.68 ahead of the field. Switzerland’s Nadja Kamer finished in second with teammate Lara Gut in a close third.

Saturday’s result marked Vonn’s 35th World Cup win, the most of any American, as she regained the downhill standings lead.

After a few deep breaths in the gate, Mancuso charged the course crossing the line in eighth after Friday’s super G was canceled when three feet of snow fell over the French resort. This was her fifth consecutive World Cup top 10.

“They did a good job pushing out all the snow, but it was

pretty soft still. I just a lost a little time in the middle but it was another solid downhill finish," said Mancuso. "Skiing's going well, I definitely want to go a little faster but it's a good solid finish."

Americans Leanne Smith (Conway, N.H.) in 18th, Laurenne Ross (Klamath Falls, Ore.) in 25th and Alice McKennis in 30th (Glenwood Springs, Colo.) all followed suit, breaking inside the top 30 to score World Cup downhill points.

The women will be back in the start gate Sunday in Val d'Isere for a super combined.

Official results, Audi FIS Alpine World Cup, Val d'Isere, France, Downhill

1. Lindsey Vonn, Vail, CO, 1:51.42
2. Nadja Kamer, Switzerland, 1:52.10
3. Lara Gut, Switzerland, 1:52.22
4. Elisabeth Goergl, Austria, 1:52.38
5. Ingrid Jacquemod, France, 1:52.61
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8. Julia Mancuso, Squaw Valley, CA, 1:52.99
18. Leanne Smith, Conway, NH, 1:53.44
25. Laurenne Ross, Klamath Falls, OR, 1:53.68
30. Alice McKennis, Glenwood Springs, CO, 1:53.96
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35. Chelsea Marshall, Pittsfield, VT, 1:54.31
40. Stacey Cook, Mammoth, CA, 1:54.74

47. Megan McJames, Park City, UT, 1:56.10