

Mancuso just misses podium in giant slalom

By U.S. Ski Team

SEMMERING, Austria -- Three-time Olympic medalist Julia Mancuso of Squaw Valley nearly returned to the Audi FIS Alpine World Cup giant slalom podium Tuesday after skiing an incredibly clean second run to finish fifth. Lindsey Vonn and Sarah Schleper of Vail continued the strong day for Americans in seventh and 15th, respectively.

Tessa Worley of France matched American Ted Ligety on the women's side winning her third consecutive GS this season with a wire-to-wire victory.

Germany went 2-3 with Maria Riesch regaining the overall lead from Vonn with second, while reigning World Cup GS champion Kathrin Hoegl was third. Megan McJames of Park City, the only other American starter, missed qualifying for a second run by just seven-hundredths.

"I've been skiing so good in training, so it's nice to put a run together," said Mancuso, who was just 0.39 off the podium. "First run I was getting knocked around a little and couldn't get back in my rhythm, so it was nice to start a little earlier in the second run. I knew I had a lot of opportunity to move up because it was so tight between the first group."

Mancuso, the 2006 Olympic GS champion, produced the second fastest second run to leap from the 18th position to fifth for her best GS finish since December 2007. Schleper followed suit and also made a move jumping from 20th in the first run to 15th, scoring World Cup points in her third GS race this season.

Despite letting the overall lead slip to Riesch, the race

continued Vonn's resurgence in giant slalom as she matched her finish from St. Moritz two weeks ago to post her third GS point scoring race this season.

"There were already tons of people out today and tomorrow's going to be crazy," said Mancuso. "We're so close to Vienna and they really love ski racing around here. it's going to be a lot of fun."

Official results, Audi FIS Alpine World Cup, Semmering, Austria, Giant Slalom

1. Tessa Worley, France, 2:09.66
2. Maria Riesch, Germany, 2:10.28
3. Kathrin Hoelzl, Germany, 2:10.44
4. Elisabeth, Goergl, Austria, 2:10.51
5. Julia Mancuso, Squaw Valley, CA, 2:10.83
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7. Lindsey Vonn, Vail, CO, 2:11.06
15. Sarah Schleper, Vail, CO, 2.11.81

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Did not qualify first run: Megan McJames, Park City, UT