

Mancuso 7th in downhill

By U.S. Ski Racing

GARMISCH-PARTENKIRCHEN, Germany – The Alpine World Championships turned into a battle between Austrians today as Anna Fenninger cruised down the slalom course to take the win from Austrian teammate and first run downhill leader Elizabeth Goergl.

Fenninger, a three-time World Juniors gold medalist, was in fourth, 0.40 seconds behind Goergl after the morning downhill run then put down the fourth-fastest slalom run to secure a winning time of two minutes, 43.23 seconds to claim her first top-level victory. Fenninger, 21, has three World Cup podiums (all in the last two years) in speed events but no previous elite victories.

Slovenia's Tina Maze was only nine hundredths of a second behind to grab the silver medal with the second-fastest slalom time (52.94) after standing tenth in the downhill (1.11 seconds back). Sweden's Anja Paerson stayed consistent, earning the bronze medal after standing third in the downhill.

Goergl, who won the super G gold medal three days ago, landed fourth after losing the majority of her lead on the bottom of the Gudiberg slalom course.

The win comes at a great time for Fenninger, who, after a disappointing 2010 season was pondering calling it a career.

Squaw Valley's Julia Mancuso, Tuesday's super G silver medalist, was the top North American in seventh after moving up from ninth in the downhill.

"I definitely needed to charge harder in the slalom and was a little conservative. I think I was a little nervous at the start because the course set was really turny," said Mancuso

who called the conditions on the slalom hill soft and spring like. "I'm looking forward to the downhill, but I'm not sure I'll do another training run. Every race is a challenge and I definitely want to do well. So far the speed track has been pretty good to me, so we'll see."

American Laurence Ross led her team into the afternoon slalom with the sixth-fastest downhill time (1:50.70). In the slalom, she straddled a gate early but stuck with it, hiking for several seconds to pull in the 28th finish.

Lindsey Vonn, who in December won this season's only World Cup super combined, ran the morning downhill leg (12th), but opted not to compete in the afternoon slalom to continue recovering from a concussion she sustained last week. Her participation upcoming races and training is being evaluated on a daily basis. She finished seventh in the super G.

Despite a roar of support from the thousands of local fans in attendance at both venues, German Maria Riesch was hampered with the continued flu symptoms that kept her out of yesterday's second downhill training. She finished 11th overall today after collapsing with exhaustion in the downhill finish area.