

U.S. men miss podium in downhill, super G

By USSA

KITZBUEHEL, Austria – After two hours of weather delays, the famed Hahnenkamm was shortened – with the fastest times coming in at under a minute. Steven Nyman (Sundance, Utah) was the top American downhiller on Saturday, taking fifth place –his best ever result in Kitzbuehel.

After winning both training runs, Kjetil Jansrud of Norway stepped on top of the podium again. Paris Dominik of Italy was second, just missing first by 0.02 seconds, and Guillermo Fayed of France took third.

“This is a good step forward and confidence builder going into Beaver Creek,” Nyman said after his downhill run. “I want to give it everything and see what I got. Hopefully I can win or get a medal. I’m stoked.”

The racers could hear the 60,000-70,000-person crowd in the start gate and even with massive delays and falling snow, the audience was electric. The spectators lined the finish of ski racing’s Super Bowl – a right-of-passage race for so many skiers. As Andrew Weibrecht (Lake Placid, N.Y.) said after the super G, “Every ski racer has two goals: an Olympic medal and a podium or a win in Kitzbuehel.”

The racers still got up to almost 80 mph, but on such a short track, there was very little room for error. Marco Sullivan (Squaw Valley) and Travis Ganong (Squaw Valley) noted that, making a couple quick mistakes, which put them down in 41 and 44, respectively.

Only his second time on the Hahnenkamm, Jared Goldberg (Holladay, Utah) had a solid run, taking 25. Wiley Maple

(Aspen,) just skied out of the points, into 31 place, while Weibrecht opted to rest and did not start.

Kitzbuehel officially started Friday. The Americans came in strong to the super G, with two-time Olympic medalist Weibrecht pulling off a career-best World Cup result in fifth place, and Nyman taking 13.

It was a gnarly course, as always, set more like a downhill than a super G, with both smooth and bumpy sections. But Weibrecht skied it cleanly and aggressively, nailing his line.

"It's always a great place to have a good result," said Weibrecht, after his run. "I wanted to start out 2015 skiing really strong and carry everything I had into the new year."

Weibrecht, who is known for winning Olympic bronze and silver in 2010 and 2014, had never cracked the World Cup top five before this race. Three out of his previous four top-10 results were in Beaver Creek. So how is the Warhorse feeling about the Vail/Beaver Creek-based FIS Alpine World Championships in two weeks?

"World Champs is a hill that I like a lot. It's game on in Vail," confirmed Weibrecht.

Nyman also had a great run, his best super G result since 2007. But, as always, the speed skier is looking for better.

"I skied well. I skied my plan. It worked out that today was pretty quick," said Nyman. "I risked it on the Hausberg [jump], but got bounced pretty low. I could have ended up in the top 10 if that didn't happen."

Jared Goldberg (Holladay, Utah) took 36 and Tim Jitloff (Reno) 46. Ted Ligety (Park City, Travis Ganong (Squaw Valley), Tommy Biesemeyer (Keene, N.Y.), Marco Sullivan (Squaw Valley) and Wiley Maple (Aspen) all did not finish.

The super G, while being a stand-alone World Cup race, also

takes place as part of a alpine combined – one super G and one slalom run. Under the lights for the slalom portion of the race, Weibrecht finished 18, Goldberg 19 and Jitloff 25 overall in the alpine combined.

Bode Miller (Franconia, N.H.) acted as the POV forerunner of the race – skiing well, but not taking too many risks. He will pull out of the downhill, deciding to focus on World Championships instead. “It’s tough because I love to win here, but to avoid the race is the right decision,” said Miller. “Another week and I should be good.”