

Ganong earns first World Cup medal

By USSA

BEAVER CREEK – In front of an enormous crowd of 20,000 screaming fans, the U.S. packed three guys into the top 10 on Birds of Prey. Travis Ganong (Squaw Valley) grabbed the silver medal at Saturday's FIS Alpine World Ski Championships downhill. Steven Nyman (Sundance, Utah) was fourth and Andrew Weibrecht (Lake Placid, N.Y.) was ninth.

Ganong was surrounded by the Swiss on the podium, as Patrick Kueng took first place and Beat Feuz third.

It was a gloriously sunny day and the place was packed. Crowds extended up the side of the race course, reaching above the finish jump. The cowbells and cheers were deafening as the Americans reached the finish.

"I could actually hear everybody off the jump," said Jared Goldberg (Holladay, Utah).

Goldberg ran bullet for the men, and had a solid run at his first World Championships appearance, finishing 20th. The crowd really exploded when Nyman got into the gate. Nyman, who was third in December's Birds of Prey World Cup, had a spectacular run, taking the lead for a few racers. Eventually, he was bumped down to fourth, just off the podium by 0.03.

"I was hammering. It was so cool. I was tucking in places I've never tucked and was just charging down the hill – giving it everything," said Nyman. "I'm happy with my run. It was really cool to come down to this, in the lead by a couple tenths, people just going nuts."

But the story of the day was 26-year-old Travis Ganong, who

took home his first World Championships medal. He skied down in second place and didn't give up the spot for the rest of the race.

"I've trained so hard the last couple of years. I love to ski. All day long, I was just super relaxed and having a good time," said Ganong, who only has two podiums in World Cups. "It's unbelievable. Skiing is the most fun thing you can do, and when it works out well in a venue and on a stage like this, it's so special."

Weibrecht was the last American down the hill, wearing bib 35, and stunned the crowd by posting the fastest splits at the top. He lost a little time when he got low after Harrier, landing him in ninth place. Still excited, he says he's looking forward to the alpine combined on Sunday.

"These are guys I ski with every day," said Weibrecht. "They were a little ahead of me today, so I'll try to get them tomorrow."