

Sullivan top U.S. finisher in downhill

By USSA

GARMISCH, Germany – After more than two hours of delays, the race finally were finally able to squeak one last downhill into February. Fighting flat light and typical thick fog on the Garmisch Kandahar, Marco Sullivan (Squaw Valley) was the top American downhiller of the day, finishing in sixth place.

It was an Austrian-dominated day, with Hannes Reichelt winning the race, Romed Baumann in second and Matthias Mayer in third. This is the second Austrian downhill podium sweep in a row, with Mayer, Max Franz and Reichelt taking first, second and third in Saalbach.

Even after hours of delays, the snow was fairly consistent – with 140 volunteers working Friday night until 10 p.m. and starting again at 4 a.m. But because of the light conditions, the track was shortened – beginning at the super G start – which did not suit the classic downhillers usually favored on the Garmisch hill.

The shortened course didn't seem to faze Sullivan (although he said going from the super G start "kind of neutered the race a little bit"), who was eighth in the second training run. Starting 23rd, he attacked the whole way down and took sixth place behind the dominating Austrians. This is his best result since his fifth place finish in Lake Louise in November.

"The race was so tight. I think a tenth – one way or the other – would have cost me five places," said Sullivan. "It's crazy. It was go-for-broke. Luckily, I skied it pretty cleanly, didn't have any big mistakes and had a good result.

Steven Nyman (Sundance, Utah), who was fourth in the training

run, looked for speed throughout his run, but was bucked around on the tricky, shortened course and took 17th. Travis Ganong (Squaw Valley) was 22, behind a three-way tie for 19. Andrew Weibrecht (Lake Placid, N.Y.) was 33rd and Wiley Maple (Aspen) 45th. Garmisch first timers Jared Goldberg (Holladay, Utah) and Bryce Bennett (Squaw Valley) were 36 and 48, respectively.