

U.S. women miss podium at Beaver Creek

By USSA

BEAVER CREEK – The FIS Alpine World Ski Championship women's downhill was run down the famed Raptor course in Beaver Creek on Friday. With uncharacteristically warm temperatures baking the Beaver Creek snow, conditions were challenging and the female racers put on a show for the fans packed into Red Tail Stadium. Lindsey Vonn (Vail) was the top finishing American, taking fifth place.

Slovenia's Tina Maze displayed unparalleled skill during her gold medal-winning run. Earning the silver, only 0.02 seconds behind Maze, was Austria's Anna Fenninger. And, Lara Gut of Switzerland rounded out the women's downhill podium.

The unseasonably warm temperatures created variable snow in the course's top and bottom flat sections, which played a role in the downhill's final standings.

"You have to hit the line right in a couple of key sections," said Vonn after her fifth place finish in the women's downhill. "Today with the faster speeds, my timing was just a little bit off. Sometimes I was little too early, sometimes a little too late. I haven't really had a great feel for the course yet. I'm the only one who didn't do the World Cup downhill [on the Raptor] last year. It just wasn't my day, unfortunately."

Even though Vonn missed the podium, she said she was still happy with her result. "I did the best I could. I fought my whole way down. I was so focused," said Vonn. "I visualized the course a thousand times. I did everything I could do and more. It just wasn't a great run. It was a good run – a top five-worthy run – but it wasn't a good enough run for a medal

today.”

Vonn was the highest finishing racer for the U.S. Ski Team. Julia Mancuso (Squaw Valley) was next, ending up in 16, and was immediately followed by Laurene Ross (Bend, Ore.) in 17. Mancuso and Ross were just a shade over two seconds off Maze’s winning time. Stacey Cook (Mammoth Mountain), who had a brutal crash in Thursday’s downhill training run, rounded out the American effort in Friday’s downhill, finishing 19 out of a field comprised of 39 international skiers.

As each American skier pushed out of the starting gate, the loud cheers of the fans at the finish line seemed to pull the skiers down the course.

“It was harder snow today and I just couldn’t feel my skis coming around for me. It didn’t work out how I wanted it to,” said a smiling Mancuso. “But it was still a lot of fun to ski and really fun to come to the finish with all the amazing fans.”