

Vonn back on top, Mancuso making strides

By U.S. Ski & Snowboard

VAL D'ISERE, France – Lindsey Vonn of Vail is back to her winning ways, taking her 78th FIS Ski World Cup victory in super-G in Val d'Isere, France, Saturday. Italy's Sofia Goggia, who much like Vonn has struggled with early-season results, finally landed on the podium in second. Norway's Ragnhild Mowinckel scored her first World Cup podium in third.

"I guess I'm not a washed-up old hag," Vonn said following the Dec. 16 victory and responding to numerous social media comments this week regarding her form as she prepares for the 2018 Olympic Winter Games. "I think I proved myself, and karma definitely comes back around. I've got some good karma coming my way."

Indeed, good karma played a key roll in Saturday's victory as she edged one win closer to the all-time World Cup victory mark of 86 wins held by the great Ingemar Stenmark.

"I almost went down there before the finish, but thankfully I was able to hold on to it and pull it out," Vonn said following her victory on the slow, soft track.

With snow, fog, and wind wiping out downhill training this week, the women tackled an abbreviated soft and bumpy super-G course – a make-up race from last week's canceled event in St. Moritz. And despite a few course holds due to fog and light snow, four American women scored World Cup points, including Laurene Ross (Bend, Ore.), who took a huge step toward returning to top form following last season's knee injury.

"The track is in a lot better shape than I thought it would be based off how much it has snowed over the past couple of

days,” said Ross, who finished eighth. “It is a little bumpy, but it’s still totally rip-able and the snow is responsive enough to feel your skis.

“Today was definitely a big step,” she added. “I feel really good to be back, and be back in race mode.”

Alice McKennis (New Castle, Colo.) was 22nd and 2016 World Juniors Downhill Champion Alice Merryweather (Hingham, Mass.) scored her first World Cup points, finishing 24th. Julia Mancuso (Squaw Valley) continued her comeback from injury, finishing her first World Cup race in more than two and a half years, in 45th position.

“It was really a bit of a challenge today with the flat light and the snow, but I stuck to my plan and skied really solid, and I’m really happy with how it went,” Merryweather said. “I have a little bit of confidence now and I’ll take it into tomorrow and charge even more.”

With downhill training canceled this week in Val d’Isere due to weather, the women race super-G again on Sunday. On Monday the tech women head to Courchevel, France, for a giant slalom and a parallel slalom under the lights. Current overall World Cup leader Mikaela Shiffrin, as well as Lindsey Vonn and Resi Stiegler will headline the tech women.