

# Squaw's Bennett Leads Team U.S. in downhill

By U.S. Ski & Snowboard

Racing under bright sunshine and on a perfect track, Bryce Bennett (Squaw Valley) led Team USA in the downhill, finishing 16th at the 2018 Olympic Winter Games Thursday.

"I treated this run like any other run," Bennett said. "I just didn't perform the way I wanted. I will use this run to move forward, over the next four years, and I will be ready for the next Olympic Winter Games."

Aksel Lund Svindal won Norway's first-ever downhill gold. His countryman Kjetil Jansrud won the silver medal. Switzerland's Beat Feuz won the bronze.

"I am super happy how I approached today and how I skied," said Jared Goldberg (Holladay, Utah), who was 20th. "I was skiing at a really high level and I am proud of that. Some things happened with the wind and made it very difficult for anyone in the middle of the pack to break the top 10. I have no control over that so I am just happy how I executed my run."

Ryan Cochran-Siegle (Starksboro, Vt.), who replaced Tommy Biesemeyer (Keene, N.Y.) after he suffered a season-ending ankle injury in Wednesday's downhill training, was 23rd.

"I feel for him (Biesemeyer) right now," Cochran-Siegle said. "When I was coming back from my injury we were working closely together, so I understand what he is going through and I only want the best for him. I am going to try best as possible to send him positive vibes and race with him again soon. I am proud of my run today and excited to race tomorrow."

“Coming into today I felt excited,” said Wiley Maple (Aspen, Colo.), who made his Olympic debut and finished 30th. “I was looking forward to racing. The Olympics are notorious for allowing anyone to do anything. I didn’t come in with the highest expectation but there is always a little bit of a dream that if I do ski well, maybe I could sneak into the top. I wasn’t too nervous, I just felt excited to be here.”

Thursday’s downhill was originally scheduled for Sunday, but high winds at the Jeongseon Alpine Centre forced Olympic organizers to reschedule the event.

“There is a great energy in this group of skiers,” said men’s coach Johnno McBride. “Although it is very difficult to have three athletes get hurt, there is a lot of positive momentum moving forward. I am very proud of the way everyone skied today. These athletes put a plan together and executed that plan. That is what I am most proud of. Their result isn’t indicative of their performance – that is just a part of the sport.”