

Mancuso 10 spots behind winner Vonn

By Matthew Piper, USSA

HAUS IM ENNSTAL, Austria — A plaid-clad Lindsey Vonn (Vail, CO) overcame a bone bruise on her left arm to tough out her fourth 2010 Audi FIS World Cup downhill win in as many races, pushing off for a fast start, building speed throughout her run on a course shortened by heavy fog Saturday in Austria.

“It was really tough,” Vonn said. “It was really short, and I knew that I had to be nearly perfect to be able to get a win today.”

The race was delayed for two hours while athletes and spectators waited for fog to lift, and the start was moved to the reserve super G start — the lowest possible alternate.



Lindsey Vonn and Stacey Cook watch the big screen as teammate Julia Mancuso burns to an 11th place finish.

Photo/Doug Haney/U.S. Ski Team

In her grey and pink plaid Spyder racing suit, Vonn looked at ease despite admitting to trouble with starts at the onset of the weekend's events. She took an early lead and held it over the early benchmark from Switzerland's Nadja Kamer to win by 0.14 seconds, her narrowest margin of victory this season.

"I had a little trouble out of the start, I caught my pole in my legs," said Vonn, who has made all but one World Cup downhill podium since February 2008 and has a commanding 164-point lead over Germany's Maria Riesch in the downhill title chase, as well as a 99-point advantage in the overall standings. "I think that cost me a little bit of time, but thankfully I had a good run."

Seeming right at home after a six-year break from racing in Haus im Ennstal, it was Vonn's fifth consecutive World Cup downhill win, dating to the discipline's championship last season.

"She's very, very confident in speed," said women's speed coach Alex Hoedlmoser. "The mental game is huge, she knows that she can beat everybody. Even today, with very, very tough conditions especially when she ran, conditions changed and got worse" and she was able to do it. "It's pretty amazing."

Vonn's continued dominance wasn't the only bright spot for the U.S. team.

Stacey Cook (Mammoth Mountain, CA) earned her first World Cup top 10 since March 2007, taking advantage of the early conditions and skiing to ninth with bib No. 2.

It snowed hard the entire race, and a significant headwind met racers on a bumpy course with flat light.

Overcoming an even later position than Vonn, Olympic champion Julia Mancuso (Olympic Valley, CA) was the third fastest

through the first interval and finished a solid run in 11th.

Chelsea Marshall (Pittsfield, VT) took 19th for her best result since Tarvisio, Italy, in February, and Leanne Smith (North Conway, NH) just missed out on making the points for the third time since tearing her ACL last January.

For Vonn, Saturday's triumph was the perfect sequel to Friday's downhill victory in a make-up for Val d'Isère, France. She not only leads the World Cup standings in overall and downhill, but also super G, and will try to complete her speed event trilogy in Sunday's super G at 2:30am.

Haus Im Ennstal, Austria – Jan. 9, Women's Downhill

1. Lindsey Vonn, Vail, CO, 1:09.12

2. Nadja Kamer, Switzerland, 1:09.26

3. Ingrid Jacquemod, France, 1:09.28

4. Marion Rolland, France, 1:09.47

5. Anja Paerson, Sweden, 1:09.52

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9. Stacey Cook, Mammoth Mountain, CA, 1:09.68

11. Julia Mancuso, Olympic Valley, CA, 1:09.82

19. Chelsea Marshall, Pittsfield, VT, 1:10.01

33. Leanne Smith, North Conway, NH, 1:10.48

45. Keely Kelleher, Big Sky, MT, 1:10.96

48. Alice McKennis, Glenwood Springs, CO, 1:11.04