

Cook leads U.S. women at Beaver Creek

By USSA

BEAVER CREEK – The 2015 FIS Alpine World Ski Championships women's downhill successfully hosted its first World Cup Friday to open the Nature Valley Raptor World Cup week. Veteran Stacey Cook (Mammoth Mountain) earned the top spot for the U.S. Ski Team, finishing 19th on a course that has been heralded by the entire Audi FIS Alpine World Cup field.

Cook finished 2.23 seconds behind the Soelden winner Lara Gut of Switzerland, who put down a smooth and aggressive line early in the race to take the victory.

"It's pretty bumpy and just is a hard course to figure out, especially when it changes day to day. It's just hard to get a grip on it and I struggled a little bit on executing my plan. That happens on new courses," Cook said.

Saturday the U.S. women's speed team takes the Raptor race speed venue again for a World Cup super G.

Three-time Olympic medalist Julia Mancuso (Squaw Valley) finished 20th, with Laurene Ross (Bend, Ore.) 22nd.

Rookie Jacqueline Wiles (Aurora, Ore.) started her first World Cup race Friday, finishing 44th. Leanne Smith (N. Conway, N.H.) had a podium run going before hooking an edge above the finish jump, forcing her to pull off course.