

Goggia wins 1st downhill of post-Vonn era

Haehlen 2nd, Schmidhofer 3rd

CRANS-MONTANA, Switzerland, Feb 23, (AP): Olympic champion Sofia Goggia won the first World Cup downhill of the post-Lindsey Vonn era on Saturday.

Goggia was rewarded with her first victory this season after taking an aggressively direct racing line typical of Vonn, the American star who retired after winning downhill bronze in the world championships two weeks ago at Are, Sweden.

World champion Ilka Stuhec crashed as the first starter

SKIING

Saturday, leaving Goggia favored to win.

The Italian racer was 0.49 seconds faster than Joana Haehlen of Switzerland on the sun-bathed 2.45-kilometer (1-1/2-mile) Mont Lachaux course.

Nicole Schmidhofer extended her lead in the downhill standings by placing third, 0.52 behind Goggia.

The result had little impact on the overall World Cup standings with runaway leader Mikaela Shiffrin skipping two weekends of races, in Switzerland and Russia, to rest after the world championships.

Goggia won the season-long

downhill title last year, but was sidelined this season by an ankle injury until returning one month ago.

Her first downhill win since the gold-medal run at the Pyeongchang Winter Games was the fourth of her World Cup career in the fastest discipline. Vonn counted 43 downhills in her women's record 82 World Cup race wins.

Stuhec, who retained her world title, lost balance landing a jump and was twisted in midair then slid into safety nets. She seemed to avoid serious injury and skied down to the finish area.

A helicopter carried Tiffany Gauthier from the course after the French racer appeared to injure her left knee before skiing to a stop.

The race was also interrupted three times to repair the finish-line timing system. The clock failed to stop after three of the first 12 starters completed their run. Each malfunction affected a Swiss skier – including Haehlen – and provoked some jeers from home fans.

"It's a bit bizarre, to arrive and there's not a time," said Lara Gut-Behrami, who skied into third place before the next starter Goggia edged her off the podium.

An Alpine combined event is scheduled Sunday at Crans-Montana, which is a candidate to host the 2025 worlds.



Italy's Sofia Goggia speeds down the course during a women's World Cup downhill, in Crans Montana, Switzerland, on Feb 23. (AP)



Yarmouk Sports Club celebrate after winning the 3rd Karate Championship for Cubs for the 2018/2019 sports season.

Yarmouk Sports Club win 3rd Karate Championship

Yarmouk Sports Club emerged winners of the 3rd Karate Championship for Cubs for the 2018/2019 sports season. About 136 karatekas from 13 clubs participated in the championship which concluded recently at the hall of Kuwait Karate Federation (KKF).

According to a press release, KKF Secretary Mansour Al-Subaie and

KKF board member Ahmad Hussein presented the championship cup to the karate team of Yarmouk Sports Club.

They expressed appreciation and gratitude to the participants from all the clubs and everyone else who contributed to the success of the championship.

Eggert, Benecken wrap up 3rd World Cup doubles crowns

Geisenberger wraps up 7th straight WC luge title

KRASNAYA POLYANA, Russia, Feb 23, (AP): Germany's Natalie Geisenberger has left no doubt, once again.

Geisenberger clinched her seventh consecutive World Cup women's luge overall championship Saturday, winning the final full-length race of the season to

secure the points crown. The only other luger to win seven straight titles was Austria's Markus Prock, who took the men's championships each year from 1990-91 through 1996-97.

The normally stoic Geisenberger flashed seven fingers for the cameras when she crossed the finish line Saturday, knowing she clinched the title. When presented with the crystal globe trophy – the one given to World Cup overall champions – moments later, she beamed before giving it a big kiss.

She posted the fastest time in both heats on the track used for the 2014 Sochi Olympics, holding off Russia's Viktoria Demchenko for her 49th career World Cup win – with a chance for the milestone 50th coming Sunday in the season-ending women's sprint race. Dajana Eitberger of Germany was third.

Geisenberger has now been in the top three of the World Cup standings in 12 consecutive seasons. She was third in 2007-08,

LUGE RACING

finished second in each of the next four seasons, won her first title in 2012-13 and hasn't lost her grip on it since.

Germany's Julia Taubitz clinched the No. 2 spot in the season points standings by finishing fifth, one spot ahead of Latvia's Kendija Aparjode. The only American finisher was Summer Britcher, who placed ninth.

Britcher remained third in the season standings and has a chance for history Sunday.

If she hangs on to that No. 3 spot – a third-place or better finish in the women's sprint race would clinch that, regardless of how any other slider fares – Britcher would become the second USA Luge singles slider to post consecutive top-three World Cup overall finishes. Duncan Kennedy is the other, after he finished either second or third in three straight years from 1991-92 through 1993-94.

Emily Sweeney of the US tapped the wall twice in her first run Saturday, and elected not to start her second run. Sweeney, the world bronze medalist, will likely finish the season 15th in the overall standings – despite missing half of the season's 12 points-awarding races.

In doubles, Toni Eggert and Sascha Benecken of Germany wrapped up their third consecutive points title and fourth overall with a second-place finish. They are the first team to win three straight World Cup doubles crowns since Patric Leitner and Alexander Resch did it from



Natalie Geisenberger of Germany celebrates her victory in women competition at the Luge World Cup 2018/2019 in Sochi, Russia, on Feb 23. (AP)

Nikitina nears WCup title

Rahneva wins skeleton race

CALGARY, Alberta, Feb 23, (AP): Canada's Mirela Rahneva won a World Cup women's skeleton race on home ice Friday, posting the fastest time in both heats to prevail by about a half-second over Germany's Tina Hermann.

Canada also grabbed the bronze, with Elisabeth Maier holding off World Cup leader Elena Nikitina of Russia.

Kendall Wesenberg was the top US woman, placing eighth.

Germany's Jacqueline Loelling, the Olympic silver medalist, was second in the World Cup standings entering the weekend and had the best chance of catching Nikitina in the season points chase. But Loelling is not scheduled to race this weekend, Hermann has moved into second place overall and Nikitina now needs only a 13th-place finish in the women's season finale on Saturday to clinch the crown.

In the men's race later Friday, Russia's Alexander Tretiakov held off South Korea's Yun

2005-06 through 2007-08.

"It was a super season," Eggert said. "For me, the overall win in the World Cup means a lot more than the world championships as it reflects your performance over the entire season."

Russia finished first and third in the doubles race, with Aleksandr Denisev and Vladislav Antonov getting their first World Cup victory and Vsevolod Kashkin and Konstantin

Sungbin for the victory, with Latvia's Martins Dukurs placing third. Austin Florian led the Americans with an 11th-place finish.

Tretiakov now leads Yun by 49 points in the seasonlong standings with one race left, meaning no worse than a fourth-place finish in the men's finale on Sunday will lock up the World Cup overall title for him.

SKELETON RACE

It is a jam-packed final weekend of the World Cup season for skeleton athletes. Because a race was canceled earlier this season in Germany after heavy snow, there are double races for both skeleton disciplines in Calgary this weekend. Women will race their World Cup season-finale on Saturday, and men will finish their circuit for the season on Sunday.

It's a farewell weekend to the season and possibly a farewell to sliding in Calgary. The track that played host to the races at the 1988 Winter Olympics faces a most uncertain future because of funding concerns.

"We've got to save the track," Rahneva said.

Korshunov teaming up for the bronze. The US did not have a sled in the doubles race, after Chris Mazdzer and Jayson Terdiman elected to end their season earlier this month so Mazdzer could return to his home in Saranac Lake, New York, to have shoulder surgery.

The men's overall points championship will be decided Sunday, the final day of the competitive luge season.

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