

Fenninger wins 2nd WCup title; Hirscher his 4th

Vonn places fifth

By Jerome Pugmire
AP Sports Writer

MERIBEL, France — Anna Fenninger overcame her nerves and a strong challenge from Tina Maze to clinch her second straight World Cup title in style Sunday, joining Marcel Hirscher on the winners' podium as he celebrated a record fourth straight men's title.

Both won their races, with Hirscher winning the men's slalom to capture his third straight globe in that discipline, and Fenninger making it a great day for the Austrians as she held off Maze to win the women's giant slalom, also defending that title in the process.

Hirscher's fourth World Cup globe put him level overall with the likes of fellow Austrian Hermann Maier, Gustav Thoeni of Italy and Pirmin Zurbriggen of Switzerland, but the Austrian is the first man to win four in a row. Marc Girardelli, an Austrian who competed for Luxembourg, is the only man with five overall titles. On the women's side, Austrian great Annemarie Moser-Proell won five in a row in the early 1970s.

IT'S ALL MINE

"It is so hard to find the words right now. But it means so much for me," Hirscher said. "What is definitely one of the greatest things is to have the record (of four straight), which I don't have to split with someone."

Hirscher had clinched his title before Sunday's race even began as closest rival Kjetil Jansrud decided to skip it — the burly



AP PHOTO

Marcel Hirscher, of Austria, poses with the men's World Cup overall title trophy at the World Cup finals in Meribel, France. He is the first man to win four overall titles in a row.

Norwegian is not a specialist in technical events — but Fenninger had it all to do as she trailed Maze by 18 points.

The showdown pitted GS world champion Fenninger against Olympic champion Maze — the World Cup winner the season before Fenninger — and did not disappoint.

Fenninger led Maze after the first run and, despite struggling to focus, hammered down the second to finish 0.38 seconds ahead of countrywoman Eva-Maria Brem — her only rival for the GS title — and 0.46 clear of Maze.

"I was really nervous at the start. Then I tried to do what I love. I was always thinking about that: 'You love it and you have to do it,'" the 25-year-old Fenninger said. "I'm happy that I can live my dream."

That was her speaking about three hours after her victory.



AP PHOTO

Anna Fenninger looks through her women's World Cup overall trophy on Sunday at the World Cup finals in Meribel, France. Fenninger successfully defended her overall World Cup and giant slalom titles after winning the season-ending GS race on Sunday.

In the moments before her last race of a fantastic season, which saw her win GS and super-G gold and silver in downhill at last month's world championships, she was gripped by fear, just dreading a Maze comeback.

"It's hard to describe. I felt a lot of pressure," Fenninger said. "Not only today but the last weeks, the last months, the last days, there was so much pressure from Tina but also from myself, from outside."

The 31-year-old Maze, who is approaching the end of her career, gave Fenninger the gift of a necklace after the race.

"I think we're both winners," Fenninger said. "Tina is very

strong and she always comes back when it's a tough race."

Fenninger finished 22 points ahead of Maze overall, while four-time champion Lindsey Vonn placed third having captured the downhill and super-G trophies in a stunning comeback season following two career-threatening knee injuries.

VONN TAKES FIFTH

Vonn placed fifth on Sunday. "It was a good day and a good way to end the season," Vonn said.

American Mikaela Shiffrin, who sealed the slalom title on Saturday for the third straight season, finished third in the GS standings;

Maze was fifth in GS and third in slalom.

Earlier, Hirscher won his eighth race of the season, his third in slalom.

He could relax, with no threat to his title from Jansrud, who was 60 points adrift and needed to place first or second to keep his mathematical chance alive — a highly unlikely feat as he does not have a top-10 result in slalom in more than nine years.

"Kjetil is one of the fairest sportsmen I have met," the 26-year-old Hirscher said. "The tactic was very simple today. To attack full gas. Not thinking about standings or positions."

SSCV freeski team sends two to Junior Worlds in Italy

Daily staff report
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Ski & Snowboard Club Vail's freeski team athletes for all ages saw great success this past month from the youngest development level athletes to the elite junior and senior athletes.

Aaron Milligan and Paula Cooper, SSCV full-time freeski athletes and Vail Ski & Snowboard Academy students, head off this week to the FIS Junior World Ski Championships from March 28- April 1 in Chiesa in Valmalenco, Italy, where Milligan qualified to compete in slopestyle and Cooper in halfpipe. SSCV freeski coach and halfpipe specialist Pete O'Brien is among the U.S. coaching staff invited to join the U.S. Junior World team in Italy.

U.S. REVOLUTION TOUR

Last week, Milligan and Cooper along with SSCV teammates Bobby Sonntag, Zach Fedrizzi, Felix Coudouy, Emerson Lawton, Sammy Schuiling, Cas Sheridan, Connor Flynn and Cole Pates, competed in an elite field of athletes at the U.S. Revolution Tour in its last stop at Mammoth Mountain, California. After the conclusion of this event, the final standings for the tour were posted with Cooper sitting in second place overall for the tour and Milligan sitting in fourth place overall among a field of over one hundred competitors. Milligan also took third place in slopestyle at Mammoth.

Among other highlights in Mammoth, Pates made it to finals in slopestyle with a strong run and Coudouy made it to finals

for halfpipe. Another set of elite development level freeski athletes from SSCV qualified for and competed in the USSA Junior National Freestyle Championships in freeski held this past week in Park City, Utah. Jack Ganley was the youngest SSCV athlete to qualify in freeskiing. Izak Little, Michael Brown and Pearson Black qualified in halfpipe, and Michael Brown and Pearson Black qualified in big air. Pearson took third in his U15 age class in big air at Junior Nationals.

'PERFORMED EXTREMELY WELL'

"I was very proud not only that these athletes qualified for one of the most esteemed events in the country, but that they tried new things and performed extremely



SPECIAL TO THE DAILY

Ski & Snowboard Club Vail freeski athlete Pearson Black, far right, took third in big air in the U15 age class at the USSA Freestyle Junior Nationals in Park City, Utah, last week.

well among a stacked field," Bob Sonntag, SSCV Freeski Coach said.

For complete results, go to <http://teamparkcityunited.com/juniornats2015/>.