

WORLD CUP

Takeaway: Mikaela is good and so is Aksel

Shiffrin overcomes giant slalom blunder, rocks the slalom

So who had a good weekend? Um, that would kinda be an easy question to answer —



Chris Freud
On Skiing

Mikaela Shiffrin and Norway's Aksel Lund Svindal. From our provincial perspective, everyone's favorite tech skier opened up a can of whatever-

you-want-to-call-it in two slalom wins in Aspen, while Svindal went 2-for-2 in speed up in Lake Louise, Alberta.

Breaking down the weekend:

SUPER SLALOM START FOR SHIFFRIN

Here are the two things that are most impressive about Shiffrin's weekend.

■ First, apparently her DNF in the giant slalom on Friday did not carry over into the weekend. While that sounds a little tongue-and-cheek, falling two or three gates before likely winning the second GS of her career really could have left a mark.

We have to keep reminding ourselves, despite all her success, she's still pretty young — 20 — and a letdown could have happened.

Nope.

If anything, that GS race served as motivation. She won on Saturday by 3.07 seconds and Sunday by a razor-thin margin of 2.65 seconds.

This is a continuing theme for Shiffrin. She is mature beyond her years. She's human, as evidenced by her GS miscue, but she does seem to have a lot of cyborg parts.

Check them off — slalom globes, Olympic gold, two FIS Alpine World Ski Championships slalom golds, including the one (February), which will likely be the only one on home snow during her career.

Shiffrin clearly compartmentalized what could have been a heart-breaking mistake with ramifications for the rest of the weekend and put it behind her. That's a fantastic asset to possess.

■ Here's scary thought for the rest of the women's slalom world. Shiffrin did not start the season well, by her standards, last year. She was 11th last year in the first slalom of the season in Levi, Finland.

For most, this is not a crisis. Shiffrin wasn't pleased.

"I'm not happy with my skiing



AP FILE PHOTO

The takeaway for Mikaela Shiffrin from this past weekend in Aspen is that she can put a tough moment behind her and still dominate.

BIRDS OF PREY 2015

Wednesday

Downhill training No. 1, 11 a.m.

Thursday

Downhill training No. 2, 11 a.m.

Friday

Downhill, 10:45 a.m.

Saturday

Super-G, 11 a.m.

Sunday

GS, 9:45 a.m. and 12:45 p.m.

today, not even a little bit — I don't have any excuses," she tweeted at the time.

She was fifth in Aspen last year.

With Levi scrubbed this year, the two slaloms in Aspen were the first races of the discipline. She's off to a decent start this year.

Let's also take a look at the calendar year. In 2015, she's won six of seven World Cup slalom starts — she was third in Flachau, Austria — not to mention a Worlds gold here in February. (Worlds don't count as World Cup wins.)

How do think Sweden's Frida Hansdotter or the Czech Republic's Sarka Strachova are feeling about taking on Shiffrin in future slalom races?

WELCOME BACK, AKSEL

OK, nobody's ever going to challenge Lindsey Vonn when it comes to her prowess of winning



Norway's Aksel Lund Svindal seems rather healthy after sweeping two races up in Lake Louise, Alberta, this past weekend.

AP FILE PHOTO

everything at Lake Louise — she has 15 wins there. Poor Svindal, he only won up there for the seventh and eighth time last weekend.

And with that, Svindal officially threw his hat into the ring for the men's overall title this year.

Before a ruptured Achilles tendon ended his 2014-15 season before it started, Svindal was second in the overall behind Austria's Marcel Hirscher the previous season. The Norwegian has shown the ability in past years to pick up points in the GS and combined — his strength remains speed — so he may be a challenge to the Austrian's reign.

By the way, Svindal has four career wins at Birds of Prey and finished sixth in both the super-G and downhill here in Worlds, the only two races of his season. That's something to keep in mind, if some races are happening here this week.

NOTABLES

■ Way to go Travis Ganong. The American hit the podium in the downhill (third) and was tied for fourth in super-G last weekend in Canada. That's a great start for him.

■ Tough weekend for Marco Sullivan up in Canada with 47th- and 41st-place finishes. Hopefully,

some home cooking will set him straight this week.

■ Steven Nyman had a solid weekend with 16th in the downhill and a nice 21st in the super-G. (He was racing bib No. 44 in that race, so that helps the cause.)

■ Andrew Weibrecht was also bib-hopping in the downhill. He went from No. 35 to 24th in the downhill. Starting within the top 30, he had a slightly disappointing 26th in the super-G.

■ And, yes, Vonn lost her ski in the Aspen GS and was a DNF. Despite that, she's the prohibitive favorite at Lake Lindsey this weekend.