

Slalom victory sets pace for Miller

After the win in St. Anton, Austria, the American is now 70 points behind World Cup leader Hermann Maier

By Philip Hersh
Chicago Tribune (KRT)

Thanks to Bode Miller, the U.S. ski team is making up for a lot of lost time on the World Cup alpine circuit.

The question now is whether Miller still has enough time to make up for points he lost—or squandered—earlier this season.

Miller's victory Sunday in a slalom at St. Anton, Austria, put him back in the running to become the first U.S. winner of a World Cup overall title since 1983.

"It's going to come down to the wire, and I never bet against myself when it comes down to the wire," Miller said.

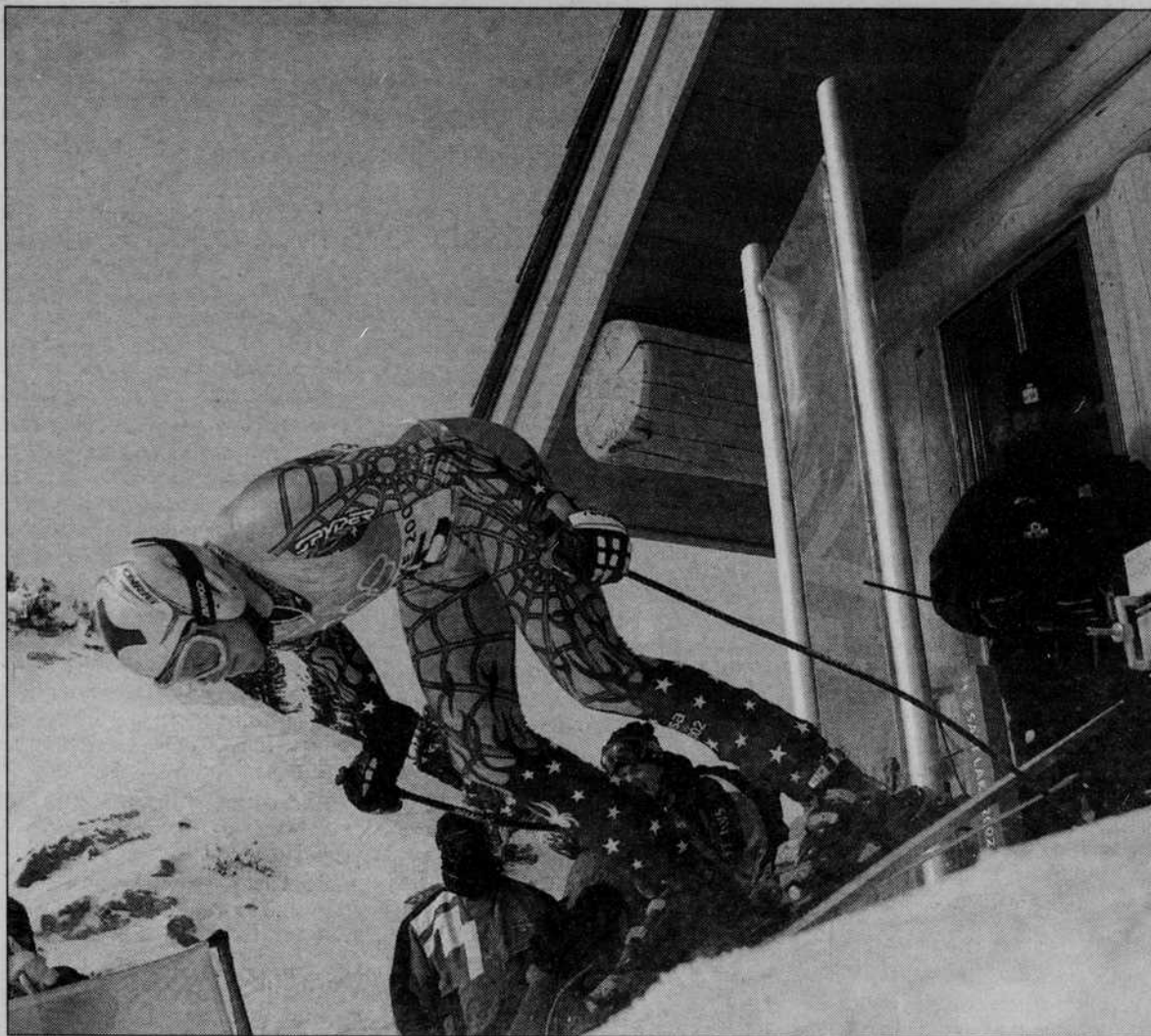
He stands third overall, one point behind Benjamin Raich and 70 behind leader Hermann Maier, both Austrians. Stephan Eberharter of Austria, overall winner the last two years, is 23 points behind Miller.

The top 30 finishers in each World Cup race earn points, with 100 to the winner, 80 for second and 60 for third, going down to one for 30th.

Miller has five World Cup wins this season, his others coming in giant slalom and combined. With Daron Rahlves having won in downhill and super-giant slalom this season, the U.S. men have victories in every alpine discipline, an unprecedented achievement for a U.S. ski team.

Miller could be in the overall lead had he skied more conservatively. He has failed to finish seven events, including three slaloms and two giant slaloms—his specialties.

Sunday's was the fourth slalom win of his career but first in two years, a drought that owes partly to equipment changes and partly to spreading his energy by racing all four disciplines the last two seasons. The latter now will work to his advantage.



Ron Jenkins Forth Worth Star-Telegram

American Bode Miller won the slalom at St. Anton, Austria, and is within striking distance of a World Cup title.

"One of the things I've got going for me is I'm the only one skiing all four events," Miller said. "If I can keep scoring in the top 10 in super-G and downhill, I have a good chance."

Eight races remain, two in each of the sport's four disciplines. Maier and Eberharter figure to dominate the speed events. Maier leads the super-G standings and is second in downhill; Eberharter is first in downhill and fourth in super-G. Miller is second in giant slalom and fifth in slalom, Raich

third in slalom and fourth in giant.

Winter bits

Raphael Poiree, a French biathlete, and his wife, Liv Grete Poiree, a Norwegian biathlete, may be the most successful married couple in sports history. The Poirees are both 29 and have been married since May 2000. They won nine medals in 10 events at the world biathlon championships in Germany, which ended Sunday with his victory in the mass-start race. She

won four golds, finishing eighth in her fifth race, and he won three golds, a silver and a bronze.

With a second place in Sunday's four-man race in Austria — the final World Cup event — U.S. bobsled driver Todd Hays finished second in the four-man season standings and second in the combined standings.

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Maybe not the greatest, but at least the best for now. Or possibly until St. Joseph's 22-straight wins and undefeated record seem more appealing than the Cardinal's winning streak.

St. Joseph's has received just as much national attention as Stanford with senior guard Jameer Nelson appearing on the latest cover of Sports Illustrated.

"If somebody asked me if I thought we had a chance of going into the tournament undefeated, I'd say we have the best chance aside from one other team (St. Joseph's)," Montgomery said.

Cal's fans not enough

Even a packed sellout crowd of 11,877 at Haas Pavilion wasn't enough to boost Cal over Stanford in a 69-58 loss.

Students camped out overnight just to get a seat.

Cal head coach Ben Braun wrote a note that was handed out to students before the game telling them, "We need you to be as loud as ever," and it also encouraged sportsmanship.

Jason Kidd was even on hand to fire up the crowd. But all of it was not enough.

It didn't help that Stanford's defense held Cal leading scorer and rebounder Leon Powe to no field goals on Saturday night. Cal (11-10, 7-5) had won three straight prior to the loss.

"They're a very good defensive team," Powe said. "They're a good team, period. I didn't play most of the game, only 18 minutes, and I couldn't get in a flow. I'll give it up to them. It's frustrating. We've got to correct what we did down the stretch making mistakes."

Cal retired Kidd's No. 5 jersey in a pregame ceremony. His uniform joins the likes of Kevin Johnson's No. 11 and Alfred Grigsby's No. 4. Kidd even spoke to his old team before the game.

Washington is rolling

Washington has quietly moved into sole possession of the fifth spot in the Pacific-10 Conference rankings over the past month.

Since Jan. 17, Washington (12-9, 7-6) has become a balanced team

and has won seven of its last eight games. The Huskies' only loss in that time frame was at UCLA on Feb. 7.

Washington squeaked by Oregon held Cal leading scorer and rebounder Leon Powe to no field goals on Saturday in a 80-79 victory. The Huskies play Washington State on Thursday and play a hot North Carolina State team on Saturday.

Stoudamire receives honor

Arizona guard Salim Stoudamire was named the Pac-10 Conference Men's Basketball Player of the Week for the span of February 9-15 on Monday.

Contact the sports reporter at jessethomas@dailyemerald.com.

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