

Synchro

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single score in the event's history.

Friday, Boys From The Hood was strong again, finishing in second place with 34.5 points.

"All of the guys are back from last year's team except one," said Aspen coach Jerry Berg. "Today, they took chances in the school figure, by skiing fast through that difficult demo, and on their final pass they jumped big and landed it, so it was a good day."

Vail Snowell, captained by Lionhead instructor Franz Fuchsberger, led the competition after the first day with 35 points. Snowell skied tight and fluid but decided not to use the jump as part of its demos on Friday. That led to some good-natured ribbing at the post-event festivities.

"Snowell is hot. They're really good. But I want to see them jump," Berg smiled.

Two teams — The Terminators from Austria and Deer Valley's DV 8's, were tied for third with 33.5 points, with Swiss team Flumserberg and Arrowhead's Obermeyer team tied for fifth with 31.5 points.

"We're really happy. We kind of pulled it together today," said Vail Snowell skier Mike Stringer. "It was an excellent day of skiing."

The winning team will receive \$8,000, with \$4,000 awarded for second, \$2,000 for third and \$1,000 for fourth. That's a hefty increase from last year's purse.

"We've seen in the past teams on the fringe of the top 10 coming all the way into the top three," said event producer Hayden Scott. "Who knows what's going to happen among the top five teams? Every single pass counts (today), so if a team has a fall, it can drop several places in an instant. It really comes down to composure."

The Terminators, the European champions from Ramsau, Austria, proved to be the most daring team on Friday. Ramsau led after the first demo, and was tied for second after the school figure.

On the final demo of the day,

Synchro, Powder 8's could be united

Sheri Crosby from the Jackson Hole Ski Resort, organizer of the Grand Nationals Powder 8 competition, was an interested spectator Friday.

Synchro Notes

Crosby, Scott, head judge Mark Nakada and others are working hard to help the sports of Powder 8's and synchro skiing evolve.

"This is really exciting. It would be great in the future to merge all of the U.S. Powder 8 events with the synchro events," Crosby said. "This one, of course, is premier, but we could possibly do it a day before a Powder 8 event."

teams competed in reverse order, with the top teams competing last.

The Terminators were going for broke on their final demo, dubbed "Ramsau 99."

"We said, 'OK, no risk, no fun. We'll take risks,'" said Ramsau captain Christian Perner, a Powder 8 skiing standout.

All eight Ramsau skiers — synchronized in looks as well as skiing styles thanks to stylin' short blonde crew cuts — descended without poles on their Atomic carving skis. After some high-speed sweeping turns at the top, the skiers barreled into the middle section of Zot, and without losing momentum, ripped over the monster kicker on the right side of the course.

One by one, the Austrians soared into the air, pulling off big twists and spreads just feet apart from each other. But only one or two of the athletes managed to land cleanly and sustain momentum to the bottom of the course. The rest yard-saled and were unable to finish.

"We had really big air on the jump, but a big crash on the landing. The most important thing is that nobody is hurt and tomorrow we'll try to compete perfect," Perner said.

The dazzling display had the large MidVail crowd buzzing long after the demo was over, even prompting one

"This is exciting. It is great for the spectator, whereas most Powder 8 events are held in areas that very few spectators can get to. It would be a great combination.

"Our goal is to pull everything under one umbrella so there's more consistency in judging. It has a lot more clout when you're going for sponsorship. The competitors, I think, would enjoy it, being on a circuit where the judges and the prize money would be consistent."

Aspen's Greg Lewis, a veteran ski racing announcer, was on hand Friday and will be back today to call the synchro action.

— Don Cameron

female spectator to declare, "Oh my god, you guys are just my heroes!"

Boys From The Hood followed with a clean performance that featured four nifty jumps, securing its hold on second.

Vail Fusion finished the day's action with "The Sonnenalp Shuffle," managing to form big boxes and pull off a few criss-crosses at a high speed.

"I think we'll be pretty happy with the results because we skied the last one our best of the day," Stringer said. "I think we know what we have to do, and that's just ski like we did today, keep in synch and keep everyone working together as a team."

Scott said today's action should be dramatic, with a handful of teams still in contention for the top honor, including defending champion Vail Fusion.

"Ramsau obviously showed its class. They were probably a little overzealous the way they skied that third pass, but the way they skied today, that's why they're the European champs in this sport. There's every chance that they can take it," Scott said. "Vail Snowell did exactly what it had to do. They had a stellar first day. They opted not to use the jump on the final pass, and I think that was a good strategy, because they held a good lead."