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Daehlie wins 10-km classical for 6th Olympic gold



A victorious Daehlie after winning the cross-country 10-km classical.

Norway's Bjorn Daehlie ran away from the field to win the men's cross-country 10-kilometer classical event at the Nagano Olympics on Thursday and become the most successful male athlete in the history of the Winter Games.

Daehlie, leading at every checkpoint through the rain at the Snow Harp cross-country course, crossed the finish line in 27 minutes, 24.5 seconds for a record sixth Olympic gold medal.

Daehlie, 30, had earlier won three gold medals at the Albertville Games in 1992 and two in Lillehammer four years ago. He also owns three Olympic silver medals and nine world championship titles.

On Thursday, Markus Gandler of Austria was the surprise silver medalist with a time of 27:32.5 and Finland's Mika Myllylae, winner of the 30-km classical event Monday, took the bronze medal in 27:40.1.

The victory was a measure of redemption for Daehlie, who finished 20th in the 30 km after selecting the wrong skis and wax for the conditions at the Snow Harp on Monday, and strengthened his reputation as the greatest cross-country skier of all time.

Vladimir Smirnov of Kazakhstan, the silver medalist to Daehlie four years ago, came in fourth Thursday with a time of 27:45.1.

Nagano native Hiroyuki Imai turned in Japan's best performance for the host country with a 28:51.5 for 19th while Masaaki Kozu, also from Nagano, was 29th in 29:23.1.

Thost rallies to win women's halfpipe

Nicola Thost of Germany came from behind to win the Olympic women's halfpipe gold medal in snowboarding Thursday.

The 20-year-old German, who placed second after the first run, performed two clean spinning jumps while zigzagging down the semi-cylindrical course under drizzly skies at Kambayashi Snowboard Park in Yamanouchi to receive the highest scores for landing and technical merit.

Thost, winner of three World Cup events this season, received the second best marks in both the first and second runs for a combined winning total of 74.6 points, edging Norway's Stine Brun Kjeldaas by a mere 0.4 point.

Kjeldaas, winner of last February's World Cup held here as an Olympic rehearsal event, moved up from a fourth-place first run to a silver medal finish after a well-balanced routine that earned her first place in the second run.

First-round leader Shannon Dunn of the United States lost balance twice and fell into third place with 72.8 points in the eight-woman final for the bronze. (Kyodo News)

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