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Postma shocks sprinters, gains 1,000 meters gold

Speed skating world champion Ids Postma wiped away the disappointment from an error that might have cost him an Olympic gold medal earlier this week by edging past fellow Dutchman Jan Bos to win the men's 1,000-meter title Sunday.

Hiroyasu Shimizu, meanwhile, continued to amaze and thrill the Japanese home crowd at the M-Wave indoor oval by adding the bronze medal to the gold he won in the men's 500 meters last Tuesday.

Postma, known more for his success at the longer distances, raced home in an Olympic record time of 1 minute, 10.64 seconds and sat

nervously on the sidelines as five pairs of skaters had yet to take the ice.

It proved unbeatable as Bos, the reigning world sprint champion, crossed the line in 1:10.71 — a mere 0.07 second short. Canadian Jeremy Wotherspoon, another pre-race favorite, struggled around the final bend and finished sixth in 1:11.39.

Shimizu, a 500-meter specialist, had an excellent start and maintained momentum through the 2-1/2 lap race. He clocked a personal-best time of 1:11.00 and joined ski jumper Kazuyoshi Funaki as Japan's only double medalists of the Nagano Games.

Postma had his chances for a gold medal in Thursday's 1,500-meter event dashed when he stumbled briefly around the final curve and had to settle for the silver.

But on Sunday the 24-year-old from Friesland leaped for joy after winning the Netherlands' first Olympic medal of any color for the men at this distance.

First-time Olympian Yusuke Imai skated a personal best of 1:11.96 and placed 11th while Japanese teammate and Lillehammer Olympic bronze medalist Manabu Horii was 17th.



Galina Koukleva getting set for biathlon gold

Koukleva of Russia wins women's 7.5-km biathlon

Galina Koukleva of Russia edged Germany's Ursula Disl for a come-from-behind victory in the women's biathlon 7.5-kilometer individual event at the Nagano Olympic Winter Games in central Japan.

Koukleva completed the first loop in only

the 13th fastest time and missed one target in the prone position but maintained her pace to post the best time in the second cross country leg and grab the lead.

The 25-year-old sports instructor got all the targets in the second round of shooting and sped away for the final run to complete the

total distance in 23 minutes, 8 seconds -- a mere 0.7 second before Disl, the leader after the first shoot.

Disl, the bronze medalist in the individual 15-km event at the 1994 Lillehammer Games, settled for the silver medal while German compatriot Katrin Apel took the bronze in a total time of 23:32.4. (Kyodo News)

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