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1998 Nagano Olympic Winter Games Day 13

Germany wins women's biathlon relay

Third runner Katrin Apel gave Germany the lead with the fourth best run of the day Thursday as the three-time world champions cruised home for the gold medal in the women's relay at the Nagano Olympic Winter Games.

Apel, the bronze medalist in the women's sprint event Sunday, completed her run over the Nozawa Onsen course in 24 minutes, 39.2 seconds to lift the German team from third to first as they glided home with the gold medal with an aggregate time of 1:40:13.6

The other members of the Olympic champion

team include sprint silver medalist Ursula Disl, Martina Zellner and anchor Petra Behle.

"We got the silver (in 1992) and now the gold. It's wonderful that we have them together as a team," Disl said, adding that personally, "This is the greatest success for me ever -- the best thing that can ever happen in an athlete's life."

Russia grabbed the silver with a 1:40:25.2, largely on the strength of sprint gold medalist Galina Koukleva's second run of 24:27.2, the second fastest run of the day over the 7.5-kilometer course.

Norway anchor Liv Grete Skjelbreid turned in

Thursday's third fastest time with a 24:34.3 as the Norwegians, runners-up a year ago in the world championships, took the bronze medal with 1:40:37.3.

Surprise leader through the first two legs, Slovakia ended up in fourth place with 1:41:20.6, ahead of Ukraine and the Czech Republic.

Japan's Mami Homma had the host country in fifth place after the first leg with a 25:31.2, but subsequent runners Hiromi Seino, Mie Takeda and Ryoko Takahashi each lost ground until Japan was left in 14th place with a 1:46:23.0.



Team Japan placed 14th in biathlon 4x7.5 km women's relay

Timmer double ups on gold in speed skating

Marianne Timmer of the Netherlands claimed her second gold medal of the Winter Games on Thursday with an Olympic record performance in the women's speed skating 1,000 meters.

The 23-year-old Timmer, who captured the 1,500-meter gold last Monday with a world record time, clocked 1 minute, 16.51 seconds at the M-Wave indoor oval to become the second speed skater to

double up on the gold medals in Nagano.

Gianni Romme, also of the Netherlands, won gold medals in the men's 5,000 and 10,000 meters — both with stunning world record times.

World record holder Christine Witty of the United States, the 1,500-meter bronze medalist, took the silver in 1:16.79 while the bronze went to 500-meter winner Catriona LeMay Doan of Canada, who clocked 1:17.37.

All the three medalists skated faster than the 10-year-old Olympic mark of 1:17.65, set by Christa Rothenburger of former East Germany at the 1988 Calgary Games.

Tomomi Okazaki, the 500-meter bronze medal winner, turned in the best performance among the Japanese entries, finishing seventh in 1:18.27. National record holder Eriko Sammiya followed in eighth 0.09 second behind.

Shiho Kusunose ended in 11th and Kyoko Shimazaki in 22nd. (Kyodo News)



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