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## 1998 Nagano Olympic Winter Games Day 16

### Daehlie wins 50-km cross country for 3rd Nagano gold



**B**jorn Daehlie collapsed across the finish line with his third gold medal of the Nagano Olympic Winter Games on Sunday, winning the men's 50-kilometer event and enhancing his reputation as the greatest cross country skier of all time.

Daehlie, 30, completed the marathon race over the difficult Snow Harp course in Hakuba in 2 hours, 5 minutes, 8.2 seconds to claim the eighth gold medal of his Olympic career and 12th medal overall, adding to his largest-ever collection of Olympic medals by a winter games athlete.

Niklas Jonsson of Sweden won the silver, coming in 8.1 seconds behind Daehlie with a 2:05:16.3, while Austria's Christian Hoffmann was a distant third with a 2:06:01.8 for the bronze medal.

Daehlie, skiing cautiously over the first half of the race on the sun-bathed course, lagged 32 seconds behind leader Alexej Prokurov of Russia in fourth place at the midway marker.

The Norwegian's conditioning and determination gradually made up the difference, however, as he forged a 28.6-second lead over Jonsson at the 46.4-km marker and held on for the gold medal.

Prokurov faded to fourth, 1:33.3 behind Daehlie.

Defending champion Vladimir Smirnov of Kazakstan, the gold medalist in Lillehammer four years ago, was eighth.

Japan's best finish was turned in by Nagano native Hiroyuki Imai, who crossed the finish line in 2:16:49.5 for 26th place. That was two places better than his effort at Lillehammer. (Kyodo News)

Snow Harp -- the final cross-country race in Nagano Olympics

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