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1998 Nagano Olympic Winter Games Day 9

Funaki, Harada one-three in large hill ski jumping



Japan's Masahiko Harada in the first jump

Japan's Kazuyoshi Funaki leaped to the large hill gold medal in Nagano Olympic ski jumping Sunday, giving the host country its third gold of the 18th Winter Games.

Funaki stood in fourth place after the first round of jumps with leap of 126 meters and secured a stunning come-from-behind victory with a 132.5-meter jump on his second try at the 120-meter hill in Hakuba for a winning total of 272.3 points.

All five judges gave Funaki, the normal hill silver medalist, full marks for style on his second jump.

Normal hill winner Jani Soininen of Finland won the silver with 260.8 points after solid jumps of 129.5 and 126.5 meters.

The bronze went to reigning large hill world champion Masahiko Harada, who set a new hill record of 136 meters in the second round of jumps to move up from sixth place with 258.3 points.

Funaki's gold is the second for Japan in Olympic ski jumping competition. Yukio Kasaya led a Japanese sweep of the 70-meter podium at the 1972 Sapporo Games along with silver medalist Akitsugu Konno and bronze medal winner Seiji Aochi.

The triumph by the 22-year-old Funaki follows gold medal performances at the Nagano Games by speed skater Hiroyasu Shimizu in the men's 500 meters and Tae Satoya in the women's freestyle skiing moguls competition. (Kyodo News)

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