

American schusses to Alpine gold

United Press International
SARAJEVO, Yugoslavia — Speeding down the mountain-side just as quick as his mouth would carry him, Bill Johnson skied himself into history Thursday and created an honest-to-goodness legend.
 The bold, brash American first befuddled conservative Europeans with his loud-mouth pronouncements of coming glory, and then he confounded the experts by his deeds of daring.
 And, in the true tradition of Muhammad Ali and Joe Namath, when the moment came to put up, he covered himself in red, white and blue glory.
 Long after these Winter

Olympics are over, and the disappointment of a shallow U.S. showing is brushed aside, it will be remembered that Johnson stung the Europeans where it hurt them the most and brought the United States its first ever gold medal in men's Alpine.
 After telling one and all for the last two weeks that he had the gold safely tucked away in his pocket, the 23-year-old daredevil beat back the European challenge Thursday and won the downhill, the glamour event of the Winter Games.
 "I think I did put some pressure on myself because if I had finished second, I would have been a real bum," Johnson said.

"It really wasn't a big surprise. I approached it as just another race, and I won. But I expected to win."
 There was only one spot on the Bjelasnica course that he was wary of, and once he passed it safely, Johnson said he told himself, "It's a motorway from here, so I put my head down and went for it. There's a speed limit in the States. I think I broke it today."
 In edging Switzerland's Peter Mueller by .27 second, with Austrian Anton Steiner third, Johnson also broke the Olympic downhill record with a time of 1 minute 45.59 seconds down the 1.9 mile course.
 Even in the euphoria of vic-

tory, Johnson managed to get in another dig, saying, "I enjoyed sticking it to the Austrians, but the Swiss are nice people. The Austrians think they should win it all the time, and you just can't do that."
 In contrast to the effusive Johnson, the women's downhill was won by shy, soft-spoken Michela Figini of Switzerland, who at the age of 17 became the youngest gold medalist ever in Alpine. Marie-Theres Nadig, also of Switzerland, was 17 days older when she won the 1972 downhill at Sapporo.
 "I have never been so happy in all my life," Figini said while wiping tears away from her eyes. "I took a lot of risks but ev-

erything went without trouble."
 Maria Walliser, the current World Cup downhill leader, gave Switzerland the silver medal behind her teammate and the bronze went to Olga Charvatova, providing Czechoslovakia its first ever Alpine medal.
 Debbie Armstrong, winner of the women's giant slalom on Monday, managed only a 21st in the downhill, placing her behind teammates Holly Flanders, who was 16th, and Maria Maricich, 19th.
 The victory by Johnson provided the United States with only its second gold medal, on the 10th day of the Games, and its fourth medal overall.

However, another gold was expected to come Thursday night from Scott Hamilton in the men's figure skating competition. Hamilton, the three-time world champion, built a solid lead in the compulsory and short program and it would take a total disaster Thursday night to keep him from winning the gold medal.
 World champion Rosalynn Summers of Edmonds, Wash., made a costly mistake in her short program earlier Thursday with a clumsy landing from a double axel that cost her the lead in the women's figure skating. Katarina Witt of East Germany moved in front with the free skating still to come with

2.2 placements to 2.6 for Summers.
 Tiffany Chin, runner-up in the U.S. Nationals, is tied for sixth and former world champion Elaine Zayas is 11th.
 Despite losing her lead, Summers still was confident of gold in Saturday night's final.
 "I feel good being in second because the long is my strong point," she said. "I wasn't nervous and I felt very confident out there. I know now that I have to skate the best I ever have and put my heart and soul into it."
 In other finals Thursday Gaetan Boucher won his second gold, and third medal overall.



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1984 WINTER OLYMPICS

U.S. skater falls back to second

United Press International
SARAJEVO, Yugoslavia — World champion Rosalynn Summers of the United States had difficulties with her short program Thursday and fell to second place behind European champion Katarina Witt of East Germany in the Winter Olympics figure skating competition.
 Summers took the lead Wednesday in the compulsory figures but lost it Thursday with a poor performance in the short program. Entering Saturday night's free skating final, Witt led with 2.2 placements against 2.6 for Summers.
 Summers made a clumsy landing from a double axel and it proved costly as Witt put on a virtually error-free performance.

Two Soviet skaters, Kira Ivanova and Yelena Vodoretzova, were third and fourth. Tiffany Chin, the 16-year-old runner-up to Summers in the U.S. nationals, had a splendid short program and moved into a three-way tie for sixth place.
 Not so fortunate was former world champion Elaine Zayak of Paramus, N.J. Zayak, a lowly 13th after the compulsory phase, did not score well with

the judges in the short program and managed to move up only to 11th, effectively ending her chances at a medal.
 Summers, urged on by hundreds of Americans in the crowd, was skating beautifully until she fouled up the double axel. She said later she still remained confident entering the finals Saturday night.

Summers, urged on by hundreds of Americans in the crowd, was skating beautifully until she fouled up the double axel.

"I feel good being in second because the long program is my strong point," said the 19-year-old native of Edmonds, Wash.

"I wasn't nervous and I felt very confident out there. I was focusing on what I did. Once I got into the axel, I knew it was tipped and I didn't want to stop in mid-air so I used the flow to get out of it."

"I won the long program at the world's (she lost the short) and I know now that I have to skate the best I ever have and put my heart and soul into it."

"I felt very happy the way I skated. My combinations were very good. I trained really hard this past year and it has given me a lot of self-confidence."

Hamilton wins gold in figure skating

United Press International
SARAJEVO, Yugoslavia — Three-time world champion Scott Hamilton became the first American since 1960 to win the Olympic gold medal in men's figure skating, holding off a determined charge by Brian Orser of Canada Thursday night to capture the title.

Hamilton had a solid free-skating performance but received rather low marks and finished second to Orser in the free skating phase. But Hamilton had built such a lead over the compulsory and short program that Orser, who entered the finals in fifth place, was unable to overtake him despite the fact that he won both the short program and free skating phases.

Hamilton, who lives in Denver, becomes the first American since David Jenkins in 1960 to win the Olympic gold medal in men. Josef Sabovcik of Czechoslovakia won the bronze. Brian Boitano of Sunnyside, Calif., had a strong free skating performance to finish fifth behind Rudi Cerne of West Germany.
 Orser skated two places before Hamilton and put on his winning performance to pull into first place. Hamilton took the ice greeted by a stomping, cheering reception from the many Americans in the crowd.

"It's been a long wait," Hamilton said. "I waited a long time for this. I was a little disappointed in the score. I didn't feel as solid but I'm glad it was enough to come out with the gold. It's been losing it a bit."

"I didn't see the rest of the competition so I don't know who everybody else got. I just went for everything. I just stopped the jumps, that's all. I was a little embarrassed about it. It was good enough to win and I'm happy with it. And I guess I earned it."

Hamilton had five 5.9s for artistic impression and four 3.0s mixed with much lower marks for technical merit. He finished the competition with 3.4 factored places to 5.6 for Orser. Sabovcik had 7.4.

Hamilton sailed though his opening triple Lutz but could combine it only with a single flip. A double instead of triple Lutz followed and Hamilton appeared to be having problems.

He took command, however, pulled out two more triples and gaining confidence, ended with an electrifying spin and was enough to earn him the gold.

On a night when many skaters fell to the ice, the highlights were the first quadruple toe loop seen in an Olympics performance by Alexandre Fadeyev of the Soviet Union. Fadeyev fell on the triple axel and attempted no more quadruples.

In speed skating action Canadian Gaetan Boucher captured the 1,500 meters title Thursday, wresting an Olympic gold medal from Soviet Sergei Khlebnikov for the second time in three days.
 The 25-year-old Quebec star, who took the 1,000 meter crown from his Soviet rival Tuesday, sped round the Zetra oval in 1 minute 58.36 seconds, just under half a second faster than Khlebnikov (1:58.83).

Until Boucher skated, Khlebnikov was out in front and seemed set to gain revenge for his earlier 1,000 meter defeat when Boucher, again skating late, had robbed him of that crown by .83 seconds.

The bronze medal in the 1,500m went to the Soviet Union's Oleg Bogeyevin with a time of 1:58.89.

Just deprived of a medal was Hans Van Helden of France, veteran of the Innsbruck 1976 Games, who was squeezed back to fourth with his 1:59.39.

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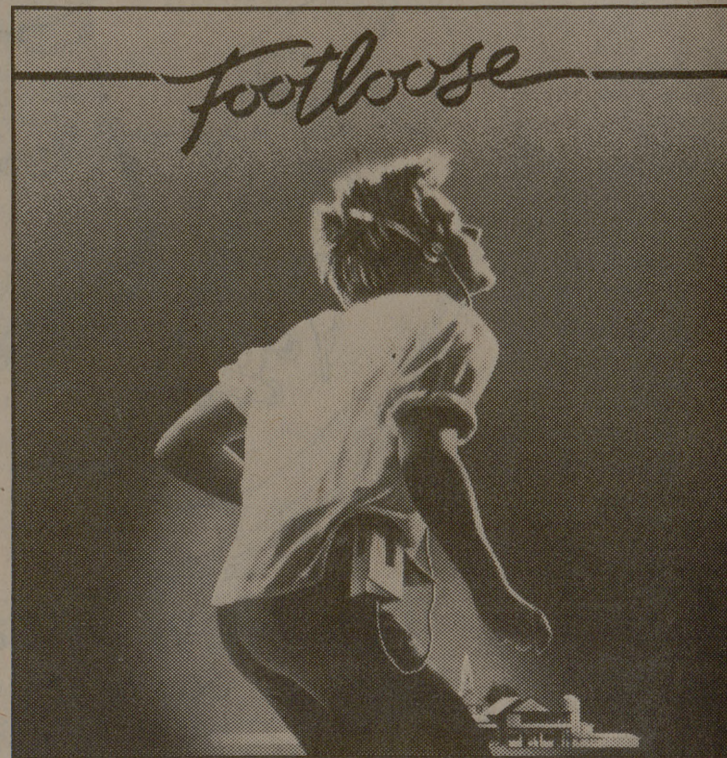
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