

## Twin angels on the ice

U.S. figure skaters Michelle Kwan and Tara Lipinski finish first and second; Nicole Bobek falls during short program

NAGANO, Japan (AP) — Gold, silver, black and blue.

Michelle was nearly perfect. Tara, too. But, oh, Nicole, what happened to you?

So went the wild dream of an Olympic sweep by U.S. women figure skaters.

Michelle Kwan imagined herself in heaven and skated like an angel in the short program Wednesday night. Tara Lipinski summoned the vision of a cartoon princess, soaring gaily in her own ice palace.

Nicole Bobek? She did not know what to think when her first triple klutz wrecked any hope of a sweep. It was a bomb of a show that left her sobbing, stunned and speechless.

The 1-2 punch of Kwan and Lipinski virtually guaranteed one of them will win the gold, the other

the silver in the best showing by the United States in 42 years.

It was not so much their position in the standings that separated Kwan and Lipinski from No. 3 Maria Butyrskaya of Russia, No. 4 Lu Chen of China, No. 5 Irina Slutskaya of Russia or No. 6 Surya Bonaly of France.

It was the way Kwan and Lipinski, the past two world champions, blended their artistry and athletic leaps so much more fluidly than everyone else.

Kwan, silky in a red and pink sequin dress, melded her skating in perfect sync with piano concertos by Rachmaninoff as if the composer had written them just for her.

"Before I started," the 17-year-old Kwan said, "I heard people cheering and I thought, 'I'm in heaven.' People clapping, billions

of people watching on TV and I'm skating. It's just me and the ice."

She had "butterflies" in the warmup, but she put them to rest by thinking, "I've done this so many times, I can do it now. I've done everything possible. I've trained hard. I kind of knocked some sense into myself."

She breezed through the eight required elements flawlessly, from her first combination — a triple lutz-double toe loop — to her final spiral. Her fine, quick footwork, her strong, graceful lines put her in a class by herself.

The judges rewarded Kwan with a solid string of 5.9s for artistry, and 5.7s and 5.8s for technical merit.

Kwan smiled and waved, not in any exuberant manner, but as if she merely did what she was expected to do and was saving emo-

## Short track skating takes center ice next for CBS

NAGANO, Japan (AP) — Eric Flaim swears this is it, his last Olympic short-track skating competition. No more roller derby on ice for him. Been there. Done that.

Of course, Cathy Turner said the same thing.

There is something about this demolition-derby event that keeps bringing them back. Call it the lure of the pack, a sort of siren's song that compels skaters to chase each other around like Times Square at rush hour and then come back for more.

CBS will show the short-track skaters Thursday night, covering the men's and women's 500-meter races and the men's 5,000-meter relay. Also scheduled is the women's 1,000-meter speedskating, the women's slalom, the men's giant slalom, cross country skiing and team ski jumping.

And for the night owls, there is a hockey semifinal game beginning at 12:35 a.m. EST Friday.

Short track is a sort of first cousin to speedskating. The difference is the clock doesn't determine the winner. Instead, what matters most is who crosses the finish line first. And please, no pushing or shoving on the passes to get there. Colliding with or obstructing an opponent is strictly prohibited.

Sure. And basketball's a non-contact sport, too.

"It's got action, drama, speed, and it's flashy and quick," coach Jeroen Otter said of his sport. "We just need to market it more and make it more understandable."

"Some people think it's like gambling or roller derby, that the one left on their feet is the winner, that it's about staying on your feet, that it's a lucky sport. But that's not the case. People don't always stay on their feet in the downhill and nobody says that's a lucky sport."

The 35-year-old Turner, who won gold medals in 1992 and 1994, has retired three times. Though she'd had no racing action since Lillehammer, she

competed here in the 3,000-meter relay as the Americans finished fifth.

"I said I was ready for a challenge," Turner said. "It's not a matter of me winning gold medals because if I'd stayed in training, I'd be there."

Turner explained what it is like on the short track when will meets power in those scrums with other skaters.

"I'm so proud of being an aggressive skater," she said. "You can't be intimidated by the big girls. They like to pass inside, and if I wasn't as aggressive as I am, if I saw one of those big Canadian girls passing on the inside, I'd say, 'Oh, go ahead.'"

Do not hold your breath, waiting for that to happen. It's not her style.

"That just makes me want to skate faster," Turner said. "That just gives me another challenge. When she goes out, that's a challenge to me."

Flaim, the only skater to win Olympic medals in both short and long track, carried the flag for the U.S. team at the opening ceremony and was a one-race skater in the 5,000 meters. He understands what Turner means.

"The thing I like about short track is that every race is different," he said. "There's always different strategies you can use, different things that happen in the race, tactics."

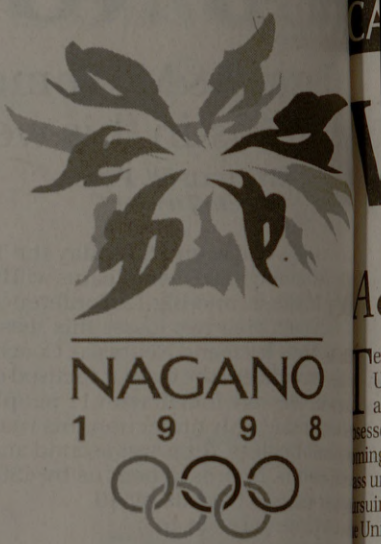
"The relays are great because you're just going all-out for seven minutes. Boom, you're out there. You get slung and you're going into the turn with all that speed and you're just hanging on. It's a real thrill. It's so exciting."

Of course, there is also the bumping part. And the falling part.

"Anything can happen and you get knocked out and that's it," Flaim said. "There's a little bit of chance element that kind of stinks. But it is exciting."

Exciting enough to come back again?

"I've said this before," Flaim said, "but this is my last time."



### MEDALS TABLE

1998 Nagano Winter Olympics  
 Wednesday, Feb. 18  
 50 total events

Nation	G	S	B	Total
Germany	7	8	7	22
Norway	7	8	4	19
Russia	8	4	1	13
Canada	4	5	3	12
Austria	2	3	7	12
United States	5	1	4	10
Netherlands	4	4	2	10
Finland	2	3	5	10
Japan	4	1	3	8
Italy	1	4	2	7
France	2	1	3	6
Switzerland	2	1	2	5
China	0	3	0	3
South Korea	2	0	0	2
Czech Republic	0	1	1	2
Sweden	0	1	1	2
Belarus	0	0	2	2
Bulgaria	1	0	0	1
Denmark	0	1	0	1
Ukraine	0	1	0	1
Belgium	0	0	1	1
Kazakhstan	0	0	1	1

G-Gold, S-Silver, B-Bronze

## 'Dream Team' leaves Nagano nightmare

NAGANO, Japan (AP) — Done and gone. The Olympic men's hockey tournament claimed its biggest victims — the greatest U.S. team ever assembled and defending champion Sweden — before either got to play for a medal.

The Czech Republic knocked out the Americans 4-1 and Finland beat Sweden 2-1 in Wednesday's quarterfinals.

Canada, seeking its first hockey gold medal since 1952, and Russia rolled on with 4-0 records. The Canadians swept past Kazakhstan and Russia defeated Belarus by identical 4-1 scores.

Friday's semifinals feature Canada and the Czech Republic (3-1) in a goal-tending showdown between Patrick Roy and Dominik Hasek, while Finland (2-2) faces Russia.

The Americans wound up sixth — an improvement over their worst-ever finish of eighth in 1994, yet well below expectations. They have not won any kind of medal since the "Miracle on Ice" team took gold in 1980.

"Everyone expected to be around here for another week and all of a sudden, you're yanked out and done," Jamie Langenbrunner said. "Everyone's frustrated because the last two games we played pretty well, but we didn't win."

The Americans had just one victory over Belarus and losses to Sweden, Canada and the Czech Republic, despite outshooting every opponent.

Facing Roy and Hasek — the world's best goalies — in consecutive games did not help. The Americans scored just once against each man.

"We played real hard every night and every game," Bill Guerin said. "Unfortunately, we didn't get the breaks. He (Hasek) was making saves when he had to and getting lucky when he had to."

Canada did not need luck or a marvelous performance by Roy against lowly Kazakhstan, outscored 25-6 in losing its three round-robin games.

Joe Nieuwendyk, Shayne Corson, Brendan Shanahan and Steve Yzerman scored for Canada. Wayne Gretzky added two assists.

"We knew that we were the superior team," Gretzky said. "We just had to be patient, be smart and play our game."

The Czechs did the same against the United States. Hasek gave up a first-period goal to Mike Modano, then his teammates scored four straight goals to send the Americans home early.

"They didn't play badly," Hasek said. "When you only score one goal, you can't win."

**"We played real hard every night and every game."**

Bill Guerin  
 U.S. Hockey Team

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