

# Yun's the one: South Korea gets men's skeleton Olympic gold

By **Tim Reynolds**  
The Associated Press

**P**YEONGCHANG, South Korea — Somehow, Yun Sungbin felt no pressure.

He's a 23-year-old who was expected to win gold and nothing else at the PyeongChang Olympics, in his home country, with thousands of his countrymen showing up early to chant his name and await a coronation.

A daunting task? Not for skeleton's new king.

Yun won for fun at these Olympics, dominant by every single measure. His four-run time of 3 minutes, 20.55 seconds was a staggering 1.63 seconds ahead of silver medallist Nikita Tregubov of Russia — the largest victory margin in Olympic skeleton history, and the largest margin in any Olympic sliding event since 1972.

"There was no reason to feel any pressure," Yun said. "I mean, it's my home track. So I can really feel at home here. And I think that I always believed it would come out greatly if I do the same things I've always done."

Someone, someday, might win a skeleton race at the Olympics by a bigger margin. But the totality of what Yun did can't be topped, only matched. He had the fastest start in all four runs. There are four spots on the course where split times were taken; he had the fastest one in all four of those, every time. So of course, he had the



fastest finish in every heat as well.

Yun's lead kept growing and growing: 0.31 seconds after one heat, 0.74 seconds after two, 1.02 seconds after three. He set the start record then lowered his own track record in the final heat, going all-out even on his final slide and becoming the first South Korean to win a gold medal in any sliding event.

Put simply, none of the other 29 men ever had a chance.

"He smashed it," said Britain's Dom Parsons, who won the bronze.

Did he ever.

Most skeleton races are decided by tenths or hundredths of a second. The average winning margin in a men's World Cup skeleton race this season was 0.37 seconds. Matt Antoine of the U.S. is a World Cup race winner; he finished these Olympics in 11th place, 3.84 seconds behind Yun.

"I'm looking at this right now as the whole of my career, the last 15-plus years," Antoine said. "This is just one race. The result is what it is. To be here, with my family here, everyone supporting me, that's all I could have asked for."

## Hanyu defends Olympic gold medal in men's figure skating

By **Barry Wilner**  
The Associated Press

**G**ANGNEUNG, South Korea — Yuzuru Hanyu was introduced as the Olympic gold medallist, skated over to the podium, and jumped high onto it. With a perfect landing, naturally.

He also leaped into the figure skating history books, becoming the first man to repeat as Olympic champion since Dick Button in 1952.

"Just happy. I can't say anymore, just happy," Hanyu said through his ever-present smile. "I just did my best today. I don't know if this is the best of my skating life, but I can say from my heart that I skated my best today."

He held off countryman Shoma Uno and Spain's Javier Fernandez in the free skate.

Coach Brian Orser met Hanyu as he left the ice after his strong but slightly flawed performance. Then Orser, a two-time Olympic silver medallist who also coaches Fernandez, rushed back behind the sideboards to help encourage the Spaniard.

Fernandez couldn't match Hanyu.

Hanyu later congratulated Fernandez and told him he wished both of them could have won.

"I told him, 'Yes, Yuzu, but only one can be champion. Only one can have the gold medal,'" Fernandez said.

Uno moved from third to second, loading a high-scoring quad and three triples into the final minute of his routine.

"I knew which level of performance I performed," he said through a translator. "I did what I intended to do."

American Nathan Chen surged from a fiasco of a short program, when he was 17th, by winning the free skate to wind up fifth. He did it with an historic routine featuring six quads.

As always, Hanyu skated to raucous support from the crowd, with thousands of Japanese flags filling the stands. He was terrific, though not perfect, particularly messing up a combination jump.

As always, he left the ice to a swarm of cascading Winnie The Pooh teddy bears flooding the ice.



**OLYMPIC CHAMP REPEATS.** Yuzuru Hanyu of Japan leaps onto the podium in celebration of his gold medal win in the men's free figure skating final in Gangneung Ice Arena at the 2018 Winter Olympics in Gangneung, South Korea. (Paul Chiasson/The Canadian Press via AP)

Uno might have won the gold if not for his magnificent countryman. His energy throughout, particularly in the back end of his routine to "Turandot," permeated the arena, and he pumped his arms wildly when he finished.

Fernandez, skating to "Man of La Mancha," was a worthy medallist, finishing just 1.66 points behind Uno.

"It means a lot for my country," Fernandez said. "We've never had a figure skating Olympic medal. We have such few Winter Olympic medals in any sports, so I hope it means a lot to everyone back home."

The 18-year-old Chen had succumbed to the pressure and massive expectations in the short program a day earlier. On the final day, he nailed virtually every element. He even did the sixth quad, a loop, getting full credit for the four rotations though he put his hands down on the ice on it.

"I think after having such a disastrous short program and being so, so low in the ranking — lower than I usually ever am — it allowed me to completely forget the results and focus on enjoying myself out on the ice," Chen said, "and getting rid of expectations helped a lot."

He led all three U.S. skaters into the top 10 as his 127.64 points for technical virtuosity put him in another stratosphere, and his 215.08 points for the free skate were a personal high.

Chen's 17-year-old teammate Vincent Zhou put down five quads — as if to say, "Hey buddy, I can do this, too" — in another spectacular jumping show. Zhou also soared in the standings, winding up sixth.

"It's been such a wild ride over my short 17 years," Zhou said. "I've been through so much, it would take me hours to say it all. But to skate like that, to have a successful performance means so much to me."

Adam Rippon doesn't do quads, but his presentation and dramatic flair earn him points. The 28-year-old dropped from seventh to 10th, but these were successful games for him, and his arm pumps to bolster the audience's cheers when he was done lent a comical touch.

"They usually say that like, after the Olympic Games, somebody's life changes forever," Rippon said. "A lot of times it's the gold medallist, but I have a feeling that my life has changed forever."

AP Sports writers Dave Skretta and Jake Seiner contributed to this report.

**"YUN! SUNG! BIN!"** Yun Sungbin of South Korea starts a run during the men's skeleton competition at the 2018 Winter Olympics in PyeongChang, South Korea. Yun's four-run time of 3 minutes, 20.55 seconds was a staggering 1.63 seconds ahead of the silver medallist and the largest victory margin in Olympic skeleton history. (AP Photo/Andy Wong)

John Daly, the other American in the field, was 16th in his third Olympics.

Yun stepped onto the award podium shortly after finishing, arms skyward as his fans roared. They showed up early on a bright morning in the Taebaek Mountains, fully expecting to see the sort of dominance he himself envisioned when taking thousands of training runs on the track that was built for these Olympics, the track he knows better than anyone else in sliding.

"Yun! Sung! Bin!" they chanted, over and over. "Yun! Sung! Bin!"

Yun delivered.

"Getting the gold medal in any Olympics is a very great result," Yun said. "But getting the gold here in my home country is a very great honor, much bigger than that."

Happy New Year, indeed. On a national holiday in South Korea — the start of the Lunar New Year — Yun became a national hero.

"Yun Sungbin is a very strong athlete," Tregubov said. "I believe he has no minuses. Excellent start. He stays calm. Excellent technique. He is better than me."

There was no shame in saying that. Yun was better than everyone.

## Shh, mom! No yelling when sister watches fellow Olympian

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hand pass.

With the busy schedules and each sister in separate groups, Hannah had to text her father for the password to watch Marissa's Olympic debut in a 0-8 loss to Switzerland. A cancelled practice allowed Hannah to join her family to watch her sister in person in a 1-4 loss to Japan.

Hannah snapped a photo of the opening puck drop, then had her phone ready to shoot video every time the Koreans came into the offensive zone. Unfortunately, she had to leave before Marissa got the assist at 9:31 of the second period on the first Korean goal in Olympic history.

"It's amazing to be able to watch her live (and) compete in the Olympics obviously and to just kind of witness history with this team," Hannah said.

Marissa and the Koreans lost their final match, 0-2, to Switzerland.

Hannah and the Americans are chasing their own history, trying to bring home the country's first gold in women's hockey since 1998.

"That would be really nice wouldn't it?" their mother said.

Worth yelling about, too.

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