

Yahoo: Ski Jumping - Japan's golden oldie Kasai flies to silver at 41



At the age of 41 you are not supposed to be launching yourself 130 metres through the night sky at 90kph wearing skin tight yellow lycra, but nobody has told Noriaki Kasai.

1) On Saturday at the RusSki Gorki Ski Jump Japanese flyer Kasai claimed an astonishing silver medal in the men's large hill competition, beating jumpers who were not even born when he first appeared on the World Cup scene.
2) Two monster leaps of 139 metres and 133.5 metres, both landed immaculately, looked set to earn him an improbable gold before Poland's Kamil Stoch, the last man to jump, edged ahead by the narrowest of margins on style points.

3) "It is hard to describe. What can I say? It is like a dream to me," Kasai, the oldest ski jumper to win an Olympic medal, told reporters after being cheered and applauded by a gaggle of excited Japanese TV crews.

4) For sheer persistence alone, Sapporo-born Kasai deserved an individual Olympic medal. He has appeared at every Winter Games since Albertville in 1992 and until Saturday all he had to show for it was a team silver from Lillehammer in 1994.

5) "All these years I was disappointed by the Olympic Games. Today I just had to do it. I wanted gold but you know it is what it is," added Kasai, who became the fourth oldest winner of an individual Winter Olympics medal.

6) While many of the favourites struggled in the breezy conditions, Kasai summoned up all his experience to soar gracefully off the end of the floodlit ice runway.

7) With no Russian challenge for medals, home fans roared him on as he completed the penultimate leap of a breathless competition and Kasai was mobbed by some of his rivals in the run-off area when he guaranteed himself a medal.

HUGE RESPECT

8) Slovenia's baby-faced 21-year-old Peter Prevc, who took bronze, summed up Kasai's achievement. "I have huge respect for Noriaki Kasai," he told reporters. "I wasn't even born when he was jumping in the World Cup and when he was battling me I said I still had 20 years to improve myself. He's an inspiration for my future jumping."

9) Stoch, who completed a rare short hill/long hill double, described Kasai as a "great man and a great character" but said he expected to be enjoying less dangerous pursuits when he was the wrong side of 40. "I hope that in 15 years time I will be laying on some nice beach and will be enjoying myself," the 26-year-old said.

10) Kasai's ski jumping career has not always been so smooth and there has been plenty of turbulence along the way. "I had moments when I almost gave up and thought nothing was going to work," said Kasai who even moved to Finland for a while to work on his technique. "But my character is to fight and never give up and now I have a silver medal. There are no secrets I just stick at it."

11) Despite his long-awaited success on Saturday, Kasai still has no plans to come back to earth and put the skis in the garage once the team competition is over next week. "Jumping is my life," he said. "I want to be in Pyeongchang in 2018, I want a gold medal."

flyer: 空を飛ぶもの astonishing: 驚くばかりの immaculately: 完璧に leap: 飛躍 improbable: 起こりそうもない edge: 辛勝する margin: 差 style points: 飛型点 applaud: 拍手する、賞賛する a gaggle of: 騒々しい群れ (gaggle はアヒルがガアガア鳴くという擬音語) sheer: まったくの persistence: 粘り強さ favourite: 優勝候補 struggle: もがく、苦しむ summon up: 奮い立たす、思い出す soar: 舞い上がる gracefully: 優雅に floodlit: 投光照明で照らされた ※floodlight=フラッドライト (物の外部や競技場、飛行機場など広域用の照明) inspiration: 刺激(する人物) on the wrong side of = ①~の悪い方に属して②(人)に嫌われて③[年齢が]~の坂を越えて turbulence: 大荒れ come back to earth: (夢から覚めて) 現実に戻る

★Ice breaker for active discussion★

1. Please describe who Noriaki Kasai is. Explain his career background. Do you know any of his turbulence (paragraph #10) he has gone through?
2. What do you think is the difference between Olympics and the other sports competition? What makes it so special?
3. Do you have anyone who is your inspiration? Who is he and why is he your inspiration?
4. When you were in your 20's, how did you picture yourself when you reach 41 years old? What are the activities that you think you would be busy with?
5. What do you think motivates him to pursue his career continuously? What is your interest and what keeps you motivated in doing it?
6. Make sentences using the following words : astonishing, immaculately, edge, a gaggle of , persistence, favourite, gracefully , turbulence and come back to earth.

NEWS de TALK by PHILOS

札幌オリンピックが開催された年に生まれた葛西紀明は小学校 3 年でスキージャンプを始めた。早くから注目を集めました。1992 年のアルベールビルから今回のソチまで連続 7 回の冬季オリンピック出場は史上最多。今年 1 月 11 日のワールドカップ第 13 戦では W 杯最年長優勝記録を更新しました。