

13 Georges Groves defends WBA super-middleweight title



14 England win battle, but Munro ensures N Zealand win the war



15 Japan's Nao Kodaira wins gold in women's 500 metres



PYEONGCHANG: (L-R) Norway's silver medallist Henrik Kristoffersen, Austria's gold medallist Marcel Hirscher and France's bronze medallist Alexis Pinturault pose on the podium during the medal ceremony for the alpine skiing men's giant slalom at the Pyeongchang Medals Plaza during the Pyeongchang 2018 Winter Olympic Games in Pyeongchang. — AFP

Nerveless Hirscher grabs Olympic double

Event's most successful skier so far

PYEONGCHANG: Marcel Hirscher mastered the jitters that have afflicted Mikaela Shiffrin and Lindsey Vonn when he powered to his second Pyeongchang Winter Olympics title yesterday, becoming the event's most successful skier so far.

While America's Shiffrin and Vonn look to recover from defeats, Hirscher hit his groove in the men's giant slalom, winning by an impressive 1.27sec-five days after his debut Olympic victory in the combined.

Norway's Oystein Braaten proved untouchable in the men's freestyle skiing slopestyle as the 16-day Games hit the halfway point, with medals in biathlon, aerials and speed skating still to come on Sunday.

Norway also won the 4x10km men's cross country relay to reach nine gold medals and draw level with Germany at the top of medals table.

It has been a long wait for Games gold for Hirscher, who is the dominant figure of World Cup racing but whose best previous Olympic result was slalom silver in 2014. However, the Austrian has flourished in South Korea. He said his years of success on the World Cup circuit proved vital as he beat Norway's Henrik Kristoffersen and France's Alexis Pinturault into second and third place.

"After the first run I thought to myself that the confidence is here and speed is here and I can win the race. There's always a mind game between the

first and second runs, but the years of experience helped me," the 28-year-old Hirscher said.

His coach Michael Pircher said simply: "Right now he's the best." While Hirscher savoured his second victory, Shiffrin was processing her defeat in the women's slalom, her pet event, after vomiting with nerves at the start gate.

"It's not necessarily the medallists who get the most out of the Olympics," the American wrote in a soul-searching statement posted on social media. "It's those who are willing to strip down to nothing and bare their soul for their love of the game. That is so much greater than Gold, Silver, or Bronze."

Vonn, who finished a disappointing sixth in

Saturday's super-G, also said she was "hurt" by accusations online that she was anti-American, following her criticism of US President Donald Trump.

"That's so far from the truth. I'm the most American person you will ever find," said Vonn, who was fastest in official training for Wednesday's women's downhill. A torrid Games for Russia, banned over doping but with 168 athletes competing as neutrals, improved as they won their third Pyeongchang silver, in the cross-country relay.

They were denied gold by the masterful Norwegian skiers, who seized the lead through Simen Hegstad Krueger in the third leg before Johannes Hoesflot Klaebo sealed victory. — AFP

Atletico keep up Barcelona chase

MADRID: Kevin Gameiro came off the bench to score one goal and make another for Diego Costa as Atletico Madrid beat Athletic Bilbao 2-0 in La Liga yesterday. It was another clinical performance from Diego Simeone's side, who have now recorded four consecutive league victories, all without their mean defence conceding a goal.

They remain second, seven points behind unbeaten league leaders Barcelona, who won 2-0 at Eibar on Saturday ahead of their Champions League last 16, first leg away to Chelsea. Former Chelsea striker Costa returned for Atletico at the Wanda Metropolitano after injury prevented him from taking part in their 4-1 Europa League win over FC Copenhagen in Denmark on Thursday. Atletico created little in the first half to get the crowd of just over 60,000 out of

their seats. However, they lived up after the restart, and in particular after Gameiro was sent on for Koke just before the hour mark. It was Atletico's French connection that led to the opening goal midway through the second half, with Antoine Griezmann setting up Gameiro, who took a touch before firing low past Kepa Arrizabalaga and into the far corner for his fifth league goal of the season.

Gameiro then turned provider with a fine through ball for Costa, who fired home to secure the points with 10 minutes remaining, the goal his second in La Liga since returning to Spain. "We are not stopping, we are playing well at the moment, and we are enjoying ourselves," said Gameiro when asked about his team's pursuit of Barcelona at the top of the table.

Atletico, who have conceded a paltry nine goals in 24 La Liga games this season, will hope to stay within striking distance of Barcelona before going to the Camp Nou in a fortnight. Simeone's side are also nine points clear of third-placed Valencia, who came from behind to win 2-1 at bottom club Malaga on Saturday. Real Madrid, in fourth, are at Betis. Earlier yesterday, Real Sociedad beat struggling Levante 3-0 at Anoeta. — AFP



MADRID: Atletico Madrid's Spanish forward Diego Costa shoots to score a goal during the Spanish league football match between Club Atletico de Madrid vs Athletic Club Bilbao at the Wanda Metropolitano stadium in Madrid. — AFP

Federer wins Rotterdam for 97th title

ROTTERDAM: Roger Federer celebrated his return to the top of the world rankings by winning the Rotterdam Open yesterday, his 97th career title. The 36-year-old, the oldest No.1 in history, thrashed Bulgarian Grigor Dimitrov 6-2, 6-2 in a one-sided final.

In the Open era, only American Jimmy Connors has won more titles with 109. "What a fantastic week," the top seed said. "The goal at start of week was to make it to the semi-finals. This is absolutely amazing, I'm really pleased." Federer, the record 20-time Grand Slam winner, will reclaim the number one ranking he last held in October 2012 when the new ATP rankings will be published today.

He has played two tournaments

this year and won both—the other being January's Australian Open. He is three years older than American Andre Agassi was when previously holding the record for oldest No.1 back in 2003.

This was his third title in Rotterdam following successes in 2005 and 2012 and he now stands 12-0 for the season. The iconic Swiss star needed just 55 minutes to dispatch Dimitrov who looked to be under-cooked in the quickfire final.

Federer now stands a perfect 7-0 over the Bulgarian in their head-to-head series. Two breaks per set were enough for Federer to advance to the trophy. Federer will now decide within a few days whether or not to travel to Dubai for the ATP event starting a week from today.

Federer has a home and training base in the UAE and has won the hard-court tournament seven times. His effort in Rotterdam appeared to take little out of him physically, with his only loss of a set coming in the quarter-final against Robin Haase. — AFP