

Germany's Hoefl-Riesch Takes Gold in Super Combined

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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ROSA KHUTOR — Germany's Maria Hoefl-Riesch confirmed her status as one of the greatest all-round female skiers in history, retaining the Olympic super combined title on Monday with a masterful display in Sochi.

Hoefl-Riesch was fifth in the opening downhill before outdoing her rivals in the slalom, finishing 0.40 seconds ahead of Austria's Nicole Hosp for her third career Olympic gold.

Julia Mancuso of the United States, who had led after the downhill, clung on in her far-less-favored slalom to take the bronze, 0.53 seconds behind Hoefl-Riesch and just one-tenth of a second ahead of much-favored Slovenian Tina Maze.

Hoefl-Riesch showed enough technical flair in the slalom to show herself as a real contender to retain her 2010 Olympic title in that discipline too. The German's slalom time of 50.60 seconds was the second best in the field, behind only Austria's Michaela Kirchgasser, who was

not in medal contention following a poor downhill.

Hoefl-Riesch, 29, has used her speed and technical ability to achieve almost broad success across Alpine skiing's five disciplines throughout her career, winning at least one world championship medal in every discipline bar the giant slalom, plus multiple World Cup golds.

Hosp had been eighth after the downhill but the Austrian slalom specialist produced the third-fastest run of the day between the gates to climb six places and take home the silver.

Slovenia's Maze, coming off her best-ever slalom and super combined season last year, rued her inability to repeat those performances in an Olympic year after coming fourth.

"I was trying to find the right feeling and I didn't manage that," she said of the slalom. "It's hard to ski slalom this way for me, this season. It's just not working out and I'm fighting myself."

There was dramatic failure for Switzerland's Lara Gut, who had been in silver medal position after the downhill but had not finished any of her last seven World Cup slalom races. That lack of expertise between the gates cost her as she quit her run after failing to make a turn in the second.

Canada's Marie-Michele Gagnon had come into the super combined as a medal contender, but endured a miserable day, coming 21st in the downhill and then falling in her favored slalom.

Liechtenstein's Tina Weirather had earlier been forced to withdraw from the competition after she sustained severe bruising in training Sunday. Weirather, seen as a potential multiple medalist in Sochi, is also in doubt for Wednesday's downhill event.

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