

## Dan Jansen: A Hero Who Never Gives Up



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Dan Jansen came from a big family. There were nine children in his Wisconsin home. In big families it is sometimes hard to find something that you can do better than anyone else, but Dan found that he had a real talent. Dan Jansen could ice skate very fast. In fact, by the age of 10 years old, Dan was speed skating in racing competitions. He loved the sport and decided early on that he wanted to be an Olympian and win the gold.

Many people dream of becoming a member of an Olympic Winter Games team, but few reach the goal. No one doubted that Dan would be an Olympian, in fact, he never had trouble making speed skating teams. Dan worked hard and won in almost every world-class event that he entered, every event except the Olympic Winter Games! Although Dan was usually favored to win the gold, it seemed that he was doomed to bad luck.

The Olympic Winter Games only comes around every four years. During practice for the Games, Dan was at the top of his sport. Each time, he was favored to win the gold medal. Dan competed in the 1984, 1988 and 1992 Games, and each time, something went wrong.

The 1992 Olympic Games in Albertville, France, was especially hard on Dan. Dan loved his family and was worried about his sister, who was very ill with leukemia. Just three hours before Dan was to race, his sister Jane died. Dan went on with the race but fell, losing his chance for a gold medal again. At this point in his life, Dan could easily have given up his goal for the gold. But instead, he decided that he would race once more and win for his sister Jane.

All over the world, people watched the Olympic Winter Games as they were broadcast from Lillehammer, Norway, in 1994. Everyone knew the story of Dan Jansen and his striving for gold. Dan's last chance would be the 1,000 meter race. His family, in the stands, cheered him on. Dan now had a wife and a little daughter Janey, who was named after his sister.

It was as if the whole world held its breath when the race began. Everyone hoped that Dan would not fall and that he would reach his goal. Dan skated the best race of his life and crossed the finish line in first place. The gold was his at last. People all over the world cheered and cried, in fact, Dan even received a congratulations call from the President of the United States! Dan had not given up, but continued to reach for his goal. He went to the stands, picked up his little daughter Janey, and skated a victory lap carrying her and the American Flag in his arms. Dan Jansen made his dream come true.