

Williams Pulverizes Sharapova to Snatch Tennis Gold

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Sharapova posing with her silver, which she called "amazing," on Saturday. **Stefan Wermuth**

LONDON — American Serena Williams demolished Russia's Maria Sharapova 6-0 6-1 to grab Olympic tennis singles gold, becoming the first player in the sport to win all four grand slams and an Olympic title in both singles and doubles.

Having completed the career "golden slam," the unstoppable American could hardly contain her excitement, jumping up and down as she waited to step on to the podium to collect her medal Saturday.

Top 20 Medalists

"I didn't think I would be this happy. I'm so pumped," the 30-year-old said, laughing off a mishap that saw the U.S. flag whipped off the rail by a gust of wind halfway through the national anthem. "I never thought I would have a gold medal in singles."

Williams, who already had two doubles gold medals with sister Venus, has surpassed the rare singles golden slam, a feat only achieved by Steffi Graf, Andre Agassi and Rafa Nadal.

"It's a great feeling. I never thought that it would happen to me. Steffi Graf was such an inspiration," she said. "I always thought the one person I wouldn't be mentioned in the same breath as was Steffi Graf. She's done everything."

Williams' win over Russian opening ceremony flag bearer Sharapova, who didn't even win a point until the third game of the match, was the most one-sided women's singles final in Olympic history, beating the previous record for the fewest games set by France's Suzanne Lenglen when she defeated Britain's Dorothy Holman 6-3 6-0 in Antwerp in 1920.

"I never played better," Williams said. "I don't feel anything invincible. I don't feel anything. I just feel good about my game, and I practiced so hard and it was time."

Sharapova, making her Olympic debut, was happy just to go home with a medal.

"She was just too quick and too powerful today," said the Russian, who had also been bidding to complete the rare singles golden slam.

"To leave with a silver is an amazing accomplishment. Obviously, it's always disappointing to lose in the finals, but it's great to get a medal, that's for sure," she said.

Earlier, her teammate Maria Kirilenko lost out on the bronze to world No. 1 Victoria Azarenka of Belarus, who defeated the Russian 6-3 6-4 to win the country's first-ever tennis medal.

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Russia won its first medal in Olympic badminton after Valeria Sorokina and Nina Vislova beat Alex Bruce and Michelle Li of Canada 21-9, 21-10 in the playoff for bronze of the scandal-tainted women's doubles on Saturday.

Both couples had failed to advance from group play, but were dropped into the quarterfinals when four other pairs from China, South Korea and Indonesia were disqualified for trying to lose their group matches to gain a favorable draw in the last eight.

The Russians had already beaten the Canadians in group play.

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Russian weightlifters Dmitry Klokov and Khadzhimurat Akkaev, both medal favorites in the men's 105-kilogram category, have withdrawn from the Olympics.

Sports Minister Vitaly Mutko on Saturday said Klokov pulled out for unspecified medical reasons. The Russian weightlifting federation said Akkaev, the 2011 world champion in the weight class, has not recovered from back surgery.

The Russian weightlifting team has yet to win a gold medal in London despite fielding one of the strongest lineups.

Gold medal favorite Oxana Slivenko withdrew from the women's 69-kilogram category

because of an injury just before the start of the Summer Games.

On Friday, two Russian silver medalists equaled the results of the winners but missed the gold because of higher body weight.

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Russian track cyclist Victoria Baranova has been expelled from the London Games after failing a pre-Olympics doping test.

A spokesman for the governing body of the sport said Baranova tested positive for testosterone July 24 in Belarus.

He added that the test was done at the request of the International Olympic Committee as part of its pre-games testing program.

The spokesman, Enrico Carpani, said Baranova had already left the games.

"She admitted her guilt — there was no problem with that — and she left the games a couple of days ago," he said Friday.

Baranova, 22, was the bronze medalist in the sprint at the European championships, and the two-time under-23 European champion in both the sprint and the keirin.

Baranova, who is coached by her father, Alexei, is listed by the sport's governing body as the No. 2-ranked sprinter and keirin rider in the world.

She told RIA-Novosti that she thought she would not be caught by anti-doping authorities.

"At the chemist, I bought the tablets containing testosterone of my own accord," she said. "I don't remember the exact name, but I think it was Andriol. Since I knew it was prohibited, I didn't mention anything about it to my coach. I took one tablet."

Baranova said she was required to take the doping test on the day she had taken the medicine.

"I was scared and instantly regretted this course of action, but I didn't tell anyone," she said. "Right before leaving for the Olympic Games, another doping sample was taken, and it was clean. I thought I got lucky and nothing would happen."

(Reuters, AP, MT)

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