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Norway's Bjoergen Wins Gold at Cross-Country Skiathlon

By The Moscow Times

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Norwegian skier Marit Bjoergen won a sprint finish to take gold in the women's 15 kilometer cross-country skiathlon at the Sochi Winter Olympics on Saturday.

Bjoergen picked up her pace on the last stretch to win by 1.8 seconds from Sweden's Charlotte Kalla. Another Norwegian, Heidi Weng, took the bronze medal, 13.2 seconds off the lead.

It is the eighth career Olympic medal for Bjoergen, known as the "Iron Lady," and her fourth win, following a golden treble at the 2010 Olympics in Vancouver, but the 33-year-old remains behind all-time medal leader and fellow Norwegian Bjorn Daehlie, who has 12 Olympic medals.

Until the last kilometer of Saturday's race, the medal-winning trio had been part of a five-woman breakaway with four-time world champion Therese Johaug of Norway and Finnish veteran Aino-Kaisa Saarinen, who finished fourth and fifth respectively.

The skiathlon is broken down into two stages of 7.5 kilometers, the first using the classical inline technique before skiers are allowed to switch to freestyle, with a motion similar to ice skating.

Earlier in the day, U.S. snowboarder Sage Kotsenburg won the first gold medal of the Games in the men's slopestyle final.

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