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Russian Gold Medalist Slams Doping Claims After Winning Gold in Beijing

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ROC athlete Alexander Bolshunov kisses his skis after winning the men's 15km+15km skiathlon race. **Sergei Bobylev / TASS**

A Russian cross-country skier slammed allegations of doping after a stunning gold-medal performance at the Beijing Winter Olympics.

Alexander Bolshunov, 25, handily won the men's skiathlon on Sunday, with more than a minute between him and his competitors.

Speaking to reporters after the race, Bolshunov hit out at a journalist who hinted at doping when asking about his dominance in the race.

"Talk of doping makes me sick," Bolshunov said. "We have clean sportsmen, clean athletes who are at the Olympics who do doping tests almost every day."

"I believe it's wrong to ask us these questions — you don't achieve these results all of a sudden, you don't become an Olympic champion, because it takes years and years of

training," Bolshunov continued.

Russian athletes are competing under the Russian Olympic Committee banner after being banned from competing under their national flag following revelations of a mass state-sponsored doping program before the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics.

Bolshunov, who won three silver medals and a bronze at the 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, criticized the reporter for his doping implications, instead inviting him to come and see the work required to compete at the Olympics.

"The training sessions are very difficult, believe me, and after you have seen how we train, I believe you and your audience will never ask these questions again," he said.

Russia, whose athletes are among the favorites at this Winter Games, has repeatedly denied the allegations of doping by the World Anti-Doping Association.

"Russia has been and remains committed to traditional Olympic values," President Vladimir Putin said in an interview with China Media Group president and chief editor Shen Haixiong last Thursday.

"We oppose the politicization of sports and attempts to use this as an instrument of pressure, unfair competition or discrimination," said the Russian president.

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