The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Ski Mountaineer Nikita Filippov Wins First Medal at 2026 Winter Olympics for Individual Neutral Athletes

February 19, 2026



Ski mountaineer Nikita Filippov. **Mikhail Tereshchenko / TASS**

Russia's Nikita Filippov claimed silver in the men's ski mountaineering sprint at the 2026 Winter Olympics on Thursday, securing the first medal for competitors listed as Individual Neutral Athletes.

Racing in Bormio, Filippov finished 1.52 seconds behind Spain's Oriol Cardona Coll, who won gold in 2 minutes 34.03 seconds. France's Thibault Anselmet took bronze, 2.31 seconds off the lead, in the event's Olympic debut.

The medal marked the first podium finish for the 20 Russian and Belarusian athletes competing in Milan-Cortina under the neutral designation "AIN."

Athletes from the two countries have faced restrictions in international sporting competitions since Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Those cleared to compete in Milan-Cortina were required to do so under a neutral flag, enter only individual events and undergo vetting to ensure they had not publicly supported the war or maintained ties to the military.

Similar conditions applied at the 2024 Summer Olympics, where 15 Russians and 17 Belarusians competed as neutrals and won a combined five medals.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2026/02/19/ski-mountaineer-nikita-filippov-wins-first-medal-at-2026-winter-olympics-for-individual-neutral-athletes-a91999