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Russia Wins Second Gold at 2026 Winter Paralympics

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Anastasia Bagiyan. **Mikhail Tereschenko / TASS**

Russia won its second gold medal at the Winter Paralympics on Tuesday after vision-impaired skier Anastasia Bagiyan and her guide Sergei Sinyakin took first place in the women's para cross-country sprint classic in Italy.

Bagiyan finished the race at the Tesero Cross-Country Skiing Stadium in three minutes and 16.1 seconds, ahead of Linn Kazmaier of Germany and Cong Jihong of China.

"I'm very pleased that our anthem will be played after so many years," Bagiyan, 24, said after the race.

"What should we tell the world? Wait for the full return of our team so that we can show what we're capable of," Sinyakin added, referring to Russia's previous bans from the Paralympic and Olympic Games.

Russia's first gold at the Games came Monday, when skier Varvara Voronchikhina won the

women’s para Alpine standing Super-G.

Both women are among six Russian and four athletes from Belarus allowed to compete under their national flags despite Russia’s ongoing war against Ukraine.

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Russia was banned from the 2018 Paralympics over a doping scandal, though some athletes were allowed to compete under a neutral flag.

Russia and Belarus were later barred from the 2022 Games following the full-scale invasion of Ukraine. A number of vetted athletes from the two countries were cleared to compete as neutrals at the 2023 Summer Paralympics in Paris.

The decision to allow Russian and Belarusian athletes to compete under their national flags at the 2026 Games has drawn criticism.

Several countries, including Ukraine, boycotted Friday’s opening ceremony, while some spectators booed the Russian delegation during the athletes’ parade at the Verona Arena.

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