

CROSS COUNTRY SKIING WCH FALUN - LADIES' SPRINT CLASSICAL TECHNIQUE 19 FEB

Bjørgen to become the first skier to reach 30 medals in WCh/OG

- > Marit Bjørgen (NOR) has won 29 medals in World Championships and Olympic Games. She is tied with Bjørn Dæhlie (NOR) on most medals ever in FIS Nordic and Alpine disciplines.
- > Bjørgen is set to become the first athlete to reach 30 medals and could do this already in the first event at WCh 2015.
- > In World Championships Bjørgen is still chasing Elena Välbe (RUS) to reach the most gold medals ever. Välbe won 14 WCh gold medals in her career, while Bjørgen is currently second with 12.
- > In the World Championships medal count Bjørgen is the all-time leader with 19 WCh medals, two ahead of Välbe, Dæhlie and Galina Kulakova (URS) who are all on 17 WCh medals.

Bjørgen could become the first to win three consecutive FIS WChs in same individual event

- > Marit Bjørgen won the sprint event at WCh 2011 (free) and 2013 (classic). She can become the first cross country skier to win the same individual event in three consecutive FIS WChs.
- > Two athletes have previously been crowned World Champion in the same individual event three times in a row, Eero Mäntyranta (FIN) on 30km 1962-1966 (including Olympic Games 1964) and Galina Kulakova (URS) on 5km 1970-1972 (including Olympic Games 1972). Up and including 1980 the Olympic Games are also counting as WChs.
- > If Bjørgen wins she will be the second oldest female cross country skiing World Champion in individual events, aged 34 years 335 days.
- > The oldest is Alevtina Kolchina (URS), who won the gold medal on 5km classical technique in Oslo 1966, 35 years 349 days old.

Bjørgen and Kowalczyk winning 15 of last 18 classic sprints in World Cup

- > Bjørgen won the last sprint held in Classic style, in Östersund (14 January)
- > Bjørgen (eight wins) and Justyna Kowalczyk (seven wins) have together won 15 of the last 18 World Cup events held in sprint classic, going back to the start of the 2011/2012-season.
- > Ingvild Flugstad Østberg in Otepää 2015, Maiken Caspersen Falla (NOR) in Drammen 2014 and Mona-Liisa Malvalehto (FIN) in Liberec 2013 are the only other winners of a sprint classic race in the last 18 World Cup events.
- > Bjørgen has a total of 16 World Cup wins in sprint classic, one more

than Petra Majdic (SLO) on 14. Justyna Kowalczyk and Bente Skari are tied on third place with nine wins each. Bjørgen has only won more races in sprint freestyle (23 career wins).

> In the 11 Championships held in sprint (WCh and Olympic Games) Marit Bjørgen (NOR) is the only athlete to win both the final sprint race before the championships and at the championships. It was in 2003 that Bjørgen won the pre WCh event in Reit Im Winkl two week prior to her WCh gold medal in Val di Fiemme. Both events were in sprint freestyle.

> Only three of the 11 winners of the last sprint race before a World Championship or Olympic Games managed to take a medal in the upcoming Championship. In addition to Bjørgen in 2003, Justyna Kowalczyk (2010) and Julija Tchevalova (2001) also claimed a medal.

> Kowalczyk has not won a gold medal in sprint classical technique. She was 2nd in Vancouver 2010, but has never won a WCh medal in the individual sprint. She was 5th in the sprint free technique in Oslo 2011, and 6th in the classic sprint in Val di Fiemme 2013.

> Sprint is the only individual event where Kowalczyk has not won a gold medal in WCh or OG. She has gold medals from 10km, 15km Skiathlon and 30km.

Stina Nilsson wants to climb the final step

> Sweden won a double in the first ever WCh held in sprint classical technique, when Emelie Öhrstig won ahead of Lina Andersson in 2005.

> Since then Sweden have only managed one medal in sprint classic, when Ida Ingemarsdotter won the silver medal in Val di Fiemme 2013.

> Ingemarsdotter has never won a sprint classic event in WC or Championships, the only of the four Swedes to start who has won is Hanna Falk, her only WC-win in sprint classic coming in Otepää in January 2010.

> Perhaps Sweden's biggest hope for a gold medal is the former junior world champion Stina Nilsson.

> Nilsson has never won a senior sprint race, but has finished on the podium in four of the last five World Cup events held in sprint classic technique. Only Marit Bjørgen has also managed a top three finish in four of the last five classic sprints held.

> Ten of the last 15 podium finishes in sprint classic in the World Cup have been won by Norwegian athletes. Nilsson has four podiums, and Katja Visnar (SLO) has one podium in the last five events.

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