

# American men return to Olympic cross-country podium

**BY BRIAN MELLEY AND  
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ASSOCIATED PRESS

TESERO, Italy — Fresh off ending a 50-year medal drought in men's cross-country skiing, American Ben Ogden proved Wednesday it was no fluke by winning a second silver. Teaming up with Gus Schumacher, the U.S. men even gave runaway favorites Norway some real competition and held off host-country Italy in the home stretch for its winningest Olympics ever at the Milan Cortina Games.

"We just proved today and all week that we're here to stay and that U.S. guys are in good form," Ogden said. "So it was awesome." Ogden became the first American man to win a cross-country skiing medal in the Olympics in 50 years when he won a silver in the sprint event on Feb. 10. Until then, Bill Koch, who won silver in 1976 in Innsbruck, was the sole American man to medal in the sport. The win in the men's team sprint makes Ogden America's most decorated male cross-country skier. The two-man relay involved two legs by each skier, with Ogden starting the race and Schumacher closing. That meant Schumacher



Kirsty Wigglesworth/AP Photo

**Ben Ogden and Gus Schumacher, of the United States, pose after winning the silver medal in the cross-country skiing men's team sprint free at the 2026 Winter Olympics, in Tesero, Italy, Wednesday.**

was competing head-to-head with Norway's Johannes Hoesflot Klaebo, who has dominated the sport and keeps setting new Olympic records. Klaebo's win Wednesday was his 10th gold medal, breaking

his own record for the most overall golds in the Winter Olympics. As Schumacher stayed on Klaebo's tail up the final climb, his focus was: "Look at Klaebo's butt and just lock in and follow that to the finish line," he said. "I did it and I'm really proud of it." Schumacher couldn't catch Klaebo but he held off Italy's Federico Pellegrino. With 10 meters to go, he saw Ogden across the finish line to greet him and knew a medal was in hand. He crossed the line 1.4 seconds behind Klaebo and collapsed in the snow. Ogden dropped to his knees and hugged his teammate and friend.

"I'm going to be the guy that got beat," Schumacher joked. "That's the problem with being second, but yeah, I am so happy with it." In recent years, the story of U.S. cross-country skiing has been about the women and super star Jessie Diggins, the current World Cup leader who is in her final Olympics. Diggins is the most decorated U.S. cross-country skier with four medals, including a gold from 2018 in Pyeongchang in the team sprint with Kikkan Randall, a silver and two bronze, including her most recent last week in the 10-kilometer interval start. Diggins and Julia Kern finished fifth in the women's

team sprint Wednesday. Ogden said the result was "huge" for U.S. skiing and he hoped the bicoastal victory — he lives in Vermont and Schumacher lives in Alaska — will provide inspiration to all skiers.

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