

Freestyle skiing prodigy Ailing (Eileen) Gu entered the Beijing 2022 Olympics with a huge amount of expectation and soon had the eyes of the world watching her every move on the snow. That seems a lot for an 18-year-old, but it is something she has quickly become used to. "In terms of the pressure, I just remember (that I) put more pressure on myself than anybody else can put on me," she told Olympics.com on Friday 18 February after completing her final event at the Winter Games. The People's Republic of China superstar is now the first athlete to win three medals in three different freestyle skiing disciplines at an Olympic Winter Games, after winning a gold medal in the women's halfpipe, a gold medal in women's big air, and a silver in women's slopestyle. In the women's halfpipe final on Friday, Gu's best score of 95.25 with her second run secured the gold medal, ahead of Canada's Cassie Sharpe and Rachael Karker. Her almost effortless style on skis is matched by her beaming smile, vibrant personality, and enviable ability to handle pressure. "I remember that I'm the one who did the work, and I'm the one who loves the sport, so I'm skiing for myself," she continued with Olympics.com. "I'm of course forever grateful for all the support that I've received, to my family, to my friends, to the fans out here. "But at the end of the day when I'm skiing, when I'm at the top, when I'm in the zone, it's just me. That's why I love to go skiing. I do it for myself." - Ailing (Eileen) Gu to Olympics.com after record medal haul

"In the other side, [to answer] the people that don't support me, in that sense it feels real good, really really good." "This one is for the haters," she added. The athlete, student and part-time model has done things at Beijing 2022 no athlete has ever done at a Games before. As well as winning a medal in all three freeski disciplines, Gu is the first Chinese freestyle skier to top the podium and is the youngest Chinese athlete to win an Olympic Winter Games gold medal, at 18 years and 158 days. "It has been two straight weeks of the most intense highs and lows I've ever experienced in my life," she said after her halfpipe gold medal. "It has changed my life forever. The second I landed the last 16 in big air I knew my life was never going to be the same." "Even then I would have never imagined that I'd walk away with another silver and another gold." "I'm so honoured to be here and I'm even more honoured by this platform that I've been given to be able to spread this message and inspire young girls through my own passion for the sport and to be able hopefully spread the sport to people that might not have heard of it before." Also a three-time Youth Olympic Winter Games medallist, having won gold in halfpipe and big air at Lausanne 2020, as well as a silver in slopestyle, Gu says she was happy to finally soak up her achievements at Beijing 2022. "My third run (in the halfpipe final) I was literally this close to doing a cork 10, doing a full run," she said. "But Zhang Kexin fell right before me on the right 10 and it kinda woke me up and I've never taken a victory lap before in my entire life, so I felt like, 'You know what, last event at the Olympics it feels like I finally deserve it'. I'm really happy." Keep up with all the action in our Live Blog updates throughout Beijing 2022, here.