

= Nastia Liukin =

Anastasia Valeryevna " Nastia " Liukin (Russian : ????????? " ????? " ????????????? ?????? ; born October 30 , 1989) is a Russian American retired artistic gymnast . She is the 2008 Olympic individual all @-@ around champion , the 2005 and 2007 world champion on the balance beam , and the 2005 world champion on the uneven bars . She is also a four @-@ time all @-@ around U.S. national champion , winning twice as a junior and twice as a senior . With nine World Championships medals , seven of them individual , Liukin is tied with Shannon Miller for the third @-@ highest tally of World Championship medals (among U.S. gymnasts) . Liukin also tied Miller 's record as the American gymnast having won the most medals in a single non @-@ boycotted Olympic Games .

Liukin was a key member of the U.S. senior team . She represented the United States at three World Championships and one Olympic Games . In October 2011 , Liukin announced that she was returning to gymnastics with the hopes of making a second Olympic team . Liukin did not make the 2012 Olympic team , after several falls at the Olympic Trials and other pre @-@ Olympic events , and retired from the sport in 2012 .

= = Personal life = =

Liukin was born on October 30 , 1989 , in Moscow , Russia SFSR , Soviet Union . She is the only child of two former Soviet champion gymnasts : 1988 Summer Olympics gold medalist Valeri Liukin and 1987 world clubs champion in rhythmic gymnastics Anna Kotchneva . Liukin and her family are members of the Russian Orthodox church . Her nickname Nastia is a Russian diminutive for Anastasia . The family immigrated to the United States when Nastia was two and a half years old , following the breakup of the Soviet Union , and settled first in New Orleans before moving to Texas . In 1994 , Valeri Liukin teamed up with another former Soviet champion athlete , Yevgeny Marchenko , to open the World Olympic Gymnastics Academy (WOGA) in Plano , Texas .

Liukin is fluent in English and Russian . She graduated from Spring Creek Academy , located in Plano , Texas , in the spring of 2007 . She enrolled as a freshman international business major at Southern Methodist University in January 2008 , and took a leave from classes to concentrate on preparations for the 2008 Olympic Games . She returned to campus in spring 2009 , but her travel schedule and professional commitments caused her to withdraw before the end of the semester . She stated that she hoped to continue her studies at New York University in the future . Nastia 's signature color is pink , hence her pink leotard worn during the 2008 Beijing Olympics all @-@ around competition .

Liukin updates a blog on her official website and regularly posts on Twitter as @ NastiaLiukin . She has a line of GK Elite leotards and grips and a line of pink gymnastics equipment from AAI .

People Magazine claimed that Liukin was in a relationship with American figure skater Evan Lysacek in a February 2010 article , but Lysacek denied the rumors in an interview with Entertainment Tonight , stating that the two were just " very close friends . " In January 2013 , Liukin began college at New York University , where she is studying sports management and psychology . In May 2016 , she graduated from NYU .

On June 1 , 2015 , Nastia Liukin became engaged to her boyfriend , Matt Lombardi , a former Boston College hockey player . She announced the engagement on Instagram , with a photo of her ring and her fiance in the background , with the caption " So this just happened ... "

= = Junior career = =

Liukin began gymnastics at the age of three because she was " always hanging around in the gym " with her parents , who could not afford a babysitter to look after her while they were working as coaches .. Liukin 's parents initially did not aspire for their daughter to become a gymnast , knowing the pressure of high @-@ level competition firsthand , but relented when they noticed her aptitude for the sport .

Liukin competed in her first National Championships as a junior in 2002 , at the age of 12 and a half . In contrast to her WOGA teammates Carly Patterson and Hollie Vise , who finished first and second , respectively , Liukin suffered a fall on the uneven bars that rendered her unable to finish the routine . She continued through the rest of the competition and , despite the incomplete bars set , finished 15th , which landed her one of the final spots on the U.S. National Team . She was chosen to compete with the U.S. team at the 2002 Junior Pan American Championships , where she contributed to the team gold medal and placed second on the uneven bars and balance beam and in the all @-@ around .

By 2003 , Liukin was one of the strongest junior gymnasts in the United States . She won the junior division of the U.S. National Championships , as well as gold medals on three of the four events : uneven bars , balance beam and floor exercise . She repeated these accomplishments in 2004 . Liukin was a member of the gold @-@ medal winning U.S. team at the 2003 Pan Am Games ; she took second place in the all @-@ around behind fellow American Chellsie Memmel . She also won the all @-@ around in the junior division of the 2004 Pacific Alliance Championships .

Born in 1989 , Liukin was ten months too young to compete as a senior in 2004 , and thus was not eligible for a place on the U.S. team for the 2004 Olympics in Athens . Her scores in the junior division at the 2004 U.S. National Championships were competitive with those being posted by the seniors , and Marta Karolyi , the U.S. national team coordinator , has said that if Liukin had been eligible , she would have been named to the Olympic team .

= = Senior career = =

= = = 2005 ? 2006 = = =

In 2005 , Liukin won her first senior National Championships and , once again , earned gold medals on the bars and beam . At the 2005 World Championships in Melbourne , she finished second in the all @-@ around behind teammate Chellsie Memmel with a score of 37 @.@ 822 .

In event finals , she won the gold on the uneven bars and balance beam and the silver on the floor exercise .

In March 2006 , Liukin placed first in the all @-@ around at the American Cup . At the 2006 Pacific Alliance Championships , Liukin tied with teammate Memmel for first in the all @-@ around , won the uneven bars title and a silver medal on beam , and contributed to the U.S. team 's gold @-@ medal performance . She competed at the 2006 U.S. Classic as the defending all @-@ around champion , but falls on the uneven bars and floor resulted in a fourth @-@ place finish . However , she scored extremely well on the balance beam and was the only competitor in the meet , junior or senior , to earn a score over 16 @.@ 00 on this event . After that when she was interviewed on ABC television show Dancing with the stars , she said , " After that , I realized that it 's not all about winning . It 's about the journey . "

In late August , at the 2006 U.S. National Championships , Liukin successfully defended her all @-@ around , beam and bars titles , becoming a two @-@ time senior national champion . She was named to the U.S. team for the 2006 World Gymnastics Championships in Aarhus , Denmark , and was expected by many to be a strong contender for the all @-@ around title . However , because of an ankle injury sustained in training before the competition began , she was only able to compete on one event , the uneven bars . In spite of her injury , in the qualification round , Liukin 's bars set earned a 16 @.@ 2 , the highest score of any competitor on any apparatus in the meet . Her bars routine in team finals scored a 15 @.@ 7 and helped the U.S. team win the silver medal . Liukin also qualified for the event finals on bars , where she took a small step on her dismount and finished with a 16 @.@ 05 , earning a silver medal behind Britain 's Beth Tweddle .

= = = 2007 = = =

Liukin 's ankle injury required surgery , and the recovery period kept her out of both national and

international competition for much of the year . In July 2007 , although she was still recovering from her injury , she returned to competition as a member of the American team for the Pan Am Games in Rio de Janeiro . She competed only on bars and beam , contributing to the team 's gold @-@ medal finish and winning individual silver medals in the uneven bars and balance beam finals .

Despite limited training time on floor and vault in the summer of 2007 , Liukin opted to compete all @-@ around at the 2007 U.S. National Championships . She posted the highest score of the entire meet on bars and the second highest score on beam on the second day of competition , winning the senior bars title for the third year in a row and placing second on beam . However , she also suffered several falls and errors on floor and vault , and finished in third place overall , more than five points behind Shawn Johnson , the all @-@ around gold medalist .

Following Nationals , Liukin was named to the American team for the World Championships in Stuttgart , Germany , where she competed all @-@ around in the team qualifying round and on bars and beam in the finals . Liukin 's score for her bars routine in team finals was a 16 @.@ 375 , the highest score of the day and , in the end , the entire World Championships . However , at the end of her beam routine , her foot slipped while she was setting up her dismount , prompting her to change her usual skill , a two and a half twisting salto , to a simple back tuck . While she lost credit for her dismount , she also avoided a deduction for a fall , and earned a 15 @.@ 175 . The team recovered from this and other mistakes to finish first overall with 184 @.@ 400 , nearly a point ahead of the silver @-@ medal Chinese .

Liukin 's struggles with the balance beam continued in the all @-@ around final , where she fell from the apparatus during her flight series . In spite of a 16 @.@ 100 on bars , the highest score of the day from any competitor on any event , she finished the competition in fifth place . In the event finals , however , Liukin rallied and regained her world champion title on the balance beam with a score of 16 @.@ 025 . She also earned a silver on the uneven bars behind Russia 's Ksenia Semenova , scoring a 16 @.@ 300 after taking a step on her dismount .

== = 2008 == =

Liukin 's first meet of the 2008 season was the American Cup in New York City , where she defeated 2007 winner Shawn Johnson to regain her title . She posted the highest score of the meet , a 16 @.@ 600 on the uneven bars . In March , Nastia competed at the Pacific Rim (formerly Pacific Alliance) Championships in San Jose , where she led the American team to a gold medal and won the all @-@ around and balance beam titles . In the team competition , Liukin posted an all @-@ time high score of 16 @.@ 650 on the uneven bars , but in event finals , she fell on her Gienger release move and took a step on her dismount , earning a 15 @.@ 225 and taking second place .

At the 2008 U.S. National Championships in Boston , Liukin fell on the floor on her double front tuck the first day of competition , but had a strong meet on her other events and placed second in the all @-@ around behind Shawn Johnson . She regained her national champion title on the beam and defended her national title on the uneven bars for the fourth consecutive year , scoring a 17 @.@ 050 in preliminaries and a 17 @.@ 100 in finals , the highest recorded score for any American gymnast at any event since the advent of the new Code of Points . In June , Liukin competed in the U.S. Olympic Trials in Philadelphia , finishing second behind Johnson and earning a berth on the American team for Beijing .

== = = 2008 Olympics == = =

Liukin performed all @-@ around in the qualifying round of competition . She fell on her dismount from the uneven bars , but nevertheless qualified to the all @-@ around final with a score of 62 @.@ 375 , which ranked her second among all competitors and 0 @.@ 35 points behind Shawn Johnson , her friend and Olympic roommate . Liukin also qualified to three event finals : beam , uneven bars (in spite of the fall) and floor exercise .

In the team finals , Liukin performed on three events : beam , bars and floor exercise . Her uneven bars score of 16 @.@ 900 was the highest mark awarded in the entire Olympic competition . Liukin

performed second on balance beam , matching her qualifying score of 15 @. @ 975 . On floor exercise , she stepped out of bounds on her first tumbling pass , incurring a 0 @. @ 1 @- @ point penalty , with a final score of 15 @. @ 200 . The American team earned the silver medal , 2 @. @ 375 points behind China .

On August 15 , Liukin performed clean routines on all four events (sticking her landings on three out of four events) to win the all @- @ around gold medal with a final score of 63 @. @ 325 . Shawn Johnson took the silver medal with a score of 62 @. @ 725 . The win marked the third time that an American woman had won the Olympic all @- @ around title ; Mary Lou Retton and Carly Patterson were the two previous American gold medalists . It was also the fourth time in the history of the Games that two athletes from the same country had taken first and second place in the women 's all @- @ around . The last time this was accomplished was the 2000 Olympics , when Romanian gymnasts won gold and silver ; Soviet gymnasts also won gold and silver all @- @ around medals at the 1952 and 1960 Games .

In the event finals , Liukin displayed a beautiful routine to earn a surprising bronze medal on floor exercise with a score of 15 @. @ 425 , behind Shawn Johnson , with 15 @. @ 500 , and Romanian Sandra Izbasa , with 15 @. @ 650 . On uneven bars , Liukin and China 's He Kexin both posted final marks of 16 @. @ 725 and earned identical A- and B @- @ panel scores of 7 @. @ 70 and 9 @. @ 025 , respectively . However , He Kexin won the gold medal , and Liukin was awarded the silver , after a tie @- @ breaking calculation that took into account individual marks given by judges on the B @- @ panel . In the balance beam final , Liukin scored 16 @. @ 025 to claim silver behind Shawn Johnson 's 16 @. @ 225 . With her fifth Beijing medal , Liukin tied Mary Lou Retton and Shannon Miller for the most gymnastics medals won by an American in a single Olympic Games .

Following her success in Beijing , Liukin was named the USOC Female Athlete of the Month (August) and ultimately USOC Co @- @ Sportswoman of the Year alongside swimmer Natalie Coughlin ; the Women 's Sports Foundation Individual Sportswoman of the Year ; FIG Athlete of the Year and USAG Sportswoman of the Year . In addition , she was ranked third in the Associated Press ' 2008 Female Athlete of the Year voting .

In March 2009 , Liukin was announced as one of 12 semifinalists for the AAU Sullivan Award . The annual award honors the athlete who best represents " the qualities of leadership , character , sportsmanship , and the ideals of amateurism . " On April 15 , 2009 , Liukin 's Olympic teammate Shawn Johnson won the AAU Sullivan Award .

== = 2009 == =

Liukin decided that she was not done with gymnastics and made her first post @- @ Olympics competitive appearance at the CoverGirl Classic , where she competed only on balance beam . She placed second behind teammate Ivana Hong . Liukin thought about competing uneven bars and beam at the U.S. Championships , but decided to once again just perform on beam . She placed fourth and looked on track to possibly make a fourth World Championships team . Liukin was added to the national team and included in the World Championships selection camp . However , she pulled out of Worlds selection consideration because she felt that she was not quite up to World Championships standards .

== = 2012 == =

After several months of conditioning , training , revamping routines and showing readiness at summer training camp , Liukin petitioned for a spot at the Visa National Championships . In order for the petition to be granted , she had to show readiness by scoring at least a 14 @. @ 0 on one apparatus at a qualifying event (the U.S. Secret Classic) on May 26 . She did so , scoring a 14 @. @ 9 on balance beam , and her petition was thereby accepted by USA Gymnastics and the selection committee .

On beam at the Visa Championships , Liukin scored a 15 @. @ 1 on night one , followed by a 14 @. @ 1 on night two to place sixth on the event . On bars , she placed a disappointing 20th after

scoring a 13 @. @ 150 on night one and 13 @. @ 650 on night two . Despite this , Liukin was chosen to compete at the Olympic Trials .

Liukin 's gymnastics career came to an end after the 2012 Olympic Trials . On the final night of competition , she fell off the bars on her Gienger release , but got back up to finish her routine and landed her first competitive dismount since her comeback . After falling , she was helped up by her coach (father) to continue her routine . Her bars routine received a 13 @. @ 950 . After she finished her beam routine , which scored a 14 @. @ 950 , she received a standing ovation from the 18 @, @ 000 fans in the HP Pavilion in San Jose . Despite the end of her gymnastics career , Liukin went to London as the athlete representative for the International Gymnastics Federation (FIG) .

= = Routines = =

Liukin was known for her long , expressive lines and flexibility . While considered weak on vault and lacking in power , she excelled at bars and beam . As of 2008 , Liukin performed the following skills on these apparatus :

= = = 2008 = = =

= = = 2012 = = =

In her 2012 comeback , Liukin performed the following skills on these apparatus :

= = = Eponymous skills = = =

= = Floor music = =

2006 ? 2008 : " Variations on Dark Eyes "

2004 ? 2005 : " Second Kill " and " Building the Bullet " by Luis Bacalov

2001 ? 2003 : " Rondo Capriccioso " by Camille Saint @-@ Saëns

= = Nastia Liukin Cup = =

The Nastia Liukin Cup is an annual gymnastics competition held in the United States that is hosted by Liukin . The inaugural edition was contested in 2010 . The competition is open to Level 10 gymnasts , who can only qualify to the event at designated invitationals across the country .

There are both junior and senior fields for the competition , and the competition takes place the Friday prior to the AT & T American Cup , which occurs on the next day , Saturday . The incentive of the competition is to give pre @-@ elite athletes the experience and opportunity to compete on a raised podium surface as well as in a large arena , which is not the norm for average USAG Optional competitions .

Many former competitors at the Cup have gone on to elite competition and even international competition , with 2012 Olympic Champion Gabby Douglas having competed in the 2010 edition . Ashton Locklear , Mykayla Skinner and Kayla Williams have also participated in the event .

= = Media appearances = =

= = = Film and television = = =

Outside of competitive gymnastics , Liukin had cameo roles in the April 2006 Touchstone Pictures film Stick It , a 2008 episode of Gossip Girl and a quick cameo appearance on the Bravo TV show

NYC Prep . She has expressed a desire to become an actress in the future . Following the Beijing Olympics , Liukin appeared on many talk shows in the United States , including The Tonight Show with Jay Leno , Late Night with Conan O'Brien and The Oprah Winfrey Show .

She also appeared in the second season of Make It or Break It .

Liukin was on The Tour of Gymnastics Superstars , which was broadcast nationwide on MyNetworkTV . Tappings of the second show of the tour were included in Frosted Pink with a Twist , a television special about women 's cancers . The TV special aired on ABC on October 12 , 2008 , and featured singers Jesse McCartney , Kenny Loggins , Cyndi Lauper and Carole King .

Liukin also guest starred on The CW series Hellcats .

On the April 16 , 2012 episode of The Price Is Right , Liukin appeared as a guest model .

On February 24 , 2015 , Liukin was announced as one of the celebrities who would compete on the 20th season of Dancing with the Stars . She was partnered with professional dancer and five @-@ time champion Derek Hough . They made it to week 9 (the semi @-@ finals) , but were then eliminated on May 12 , 2015 , despite receiving the highest scores of that week and consistently earning high scores throughout the season .

On May 4 , 2015 , Liukin was announced as the grand marshal for the 99th Indianapolis 500 .

Liukin serves as an analyst for NBC Sports Group during their coverage of gymnastics events and was a contributor for NBCOlympics.com during the 2012 Summer Olympic Games in London . She was also a special correspondent for NBC during the 2014 Winter Olympic Games in Sochi . During the Sochi broadcast , she presented daily features for ? The Olympic Zone , ? a 30 @-@ minute daily show for NBC affiliates , covering all aspects of the Games .

Liukin is also a professional speaker on such subjects as Olympians and women in sports .

= = = Professional alliances = = =

Liukin has her own line of gymnastics equipment , which includes mats , bars and balance beams in her signature pink , produced by American Athletic , Inc .

Liukin 's corporate sponsors include Visa , AT & T , GK Elite Sportswear and Longines . She appeared in an Adidas commercial with Nadia Com?neci that ran during the 2004 Olympics and a 2008 commercial for Visa Inc . She signed an endorsement deal on March 15 , 2010 , and appears in commercials for Subway . After the Beijing Olympics , she was signed to be one of four American Olympians featured on Wheaties cereal boxes .

Liukin has expressed interest in the fashion world ; she has served as a Longines Sports Ambassador of Elegance since 2006 and , along with her teammates Shawn Johnson and Alicia Sacramone , was one of the first female athletes ever to be signed as CoverGirl spokesmodels . She also collaborated with Vanilla Star Jeans to create a junior girls ' clothing line and has modeled for Max Azria . In June 2010 , she launched a line of girls ' wear called Supergirl by Nastia for department store chain JC Penney .

Liukin is also a major aide for victims of natural disasters . In October 2008 , Liukin partnered with World Vision to help her home state of Texas recover from Hurricane Ike . In November 2012 , she helped raise money and donated food to victims of Hurricane Sandy .

= = = Literature = = =

Liukin released her autobiography , Finding My Shine , on November 24 , 2015 .

= = Competitive history = =