

Kanaeva rewrites Olympic history



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Evgenia Kanayev (RIA Novosti / Vladimir Pesnya)

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Russia's Evgenia Kanaeva has become the first woman to win two Olympic rhythmic gymnastics all-around titles. The 22-year-old outshone another Russian, Daria Dmitrieva, on Saturday as the duo finished well ahead of other opponents.

Kanaeva leapfrogged Dmitrieva, who occupied the top spot after the first day of the competition, courtesy of her flawless performance in the final. She scored a total of 116.90 more than two points ahead of Dmitrieva with other opponents trailing by a mile.

The win caps off a spectacular four-year run for Kanaeva, who has also won the last three world titles. She has also become the fourth consecutive Russian to win an Olympic all-around title.

Kanaeva repeats gold triumph

Russia's Evgeniya Kanaeva became the first Rhythmic Gymnastics athlete to defend an Olympic title after she won gold with a series of breathtaking performances in today's Individual All-Around final at Wembley Arena.



Kanaeva was in a class of her own as she scored 116.900 to retain her title, ahead of fellow Russian Daria Dmitrieva on 114.500 in silver.

Liubou Charkashyna of Belarus scored 111.700 to win bronze.

Each of the 10 gymnasts in the final competed with four pieces of apparatus - the hoop, ball, clubs and ribbon - in a bid to be crowned Olympic champion, but no-one could come close to the 22-year-old three-time world champion from Russia.

Charkashyna got the competition under way with a strong hoop routine to score 28.100 before Kanaeva fired ahead with 29.350, effortlessly incorporating her gold-coloured hoop into her stylish performance.

Dmitrieva, who came second in qualification, scored 28.300 as Russia occupied the top two positions after the first rotation.

Israel's Neta Rivkin was the first to compete with the next apparatus, the ball, and produced a beautifully lyrical routine before Kanaeva's stunning performance scored her 29.200 to keep her in front at the halfway stage.

Dmitrieva could only score 28.350 in comparison as the gap widened at the top to 1.9 marks, with Republic of Korea's Son Yeon-Jae in third after a balletic ball routine.

The clubs were the next, and with Kanaeva competing last with the apparatus, she knew what she needed to do in order to retain her lead.

Poland's Joanna Mitrosz was up first and set the early standard before Dmitrieva returned to the floor in a bright lime leotard which was as electrifying as her 28.750-scoring performance.

Charkashyna moved up into second place behind the Russian after Son's score was down on the first two rounds before Kanaeva regained top spot with a stellar performance which gained her 29.450.

With just the ribbon to go, Azerbaijan's Aliya Garayeva launched her final push for a medal after lying in fourth following the first three pieces of apparatus.

Garayeva saved the best until last and scored 28.250 to move into bronze medal position as Son narrowly fell short, just 0.100 marks behind the Azerbaijani gymnast.

However, the race for medals was not done, and Charkashyna blended ballet with expression in an emotional ribbon routine to score 28.075 and seal bronze.

Kanaeva finished off in style with an effortless performance to score 28.900 which meant even a perfect score by fellow Russian Dmitrieva would not be enough for her to overtake her at the top.

Dmitrieva then made sure of silver with the highest scoring ribbon routine, 29.100, as Russia made evident their dominance in the competition.

Kanaeva's Biography

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yevgeniya_Kanayeva

