

SPORTS

Never Say Never

Simone Biles Doesn't Rule Out the 2028 Olympics

(AP) — Simone Biles is getting kind of old for this. Just maybe not too old to keep going.

Maybe. Minutes after the American gymnastics star won the seventh Olympic gold of her career on Saturday in a vault final that left little doubt that even at 27 she remains in a class by herself, she played coy when asked if the event marked the final time she would ever explode off the springboard in competition.

While Biles allowed she was officially retiring her eponymous Yurchenko double pike vault because “I kind of nailed that one” at the Paris Olympics, she didn't rule out a return to the Games when they move to Los Angeles in 2028.

“Never say never,” Biles said. “Next Olympics are at home. So you just never know. I am getting really old.”

At times, it's hard to tell.

Her sequined red leotard a blur in the air, Biles averaged 15.300 on her two vaults to



Simone Biles, of the United States, celebrates after winning the gold medal at the medal ceremony during the women's artistic gymnastics individual vault finals at Bercy Arena at the 2024 Summer Olympics, Saturday, Aug. 3, 2024, in Paris, France. (AP Photo/Francisco Seco)

claim a second gold in the event eight years after she triumphed in Rio de Janeiro.

Three years ago in the run-up to Tokyo she tinkered with the Yurchenko double pike, the hardest vault ever done by a woman, but she didn't get a chance to throw it

in the Olympics. She opted instead for an Amanar, which requires 2 1/2 twists. That changed in the team final, when the “twisties” she'd been experiencing forced her to bail out of an Amanar and multiple event finals, forever altering the course of her career.

The experience left both Biles and coach Laurent Landi a little “traumatized,” as Biles put it. They both agreed there was no need to revisit the Amanar while preparing for Paris.

Yet rather than opt for something easier, they chose something even more difficult. Fitting for an athlete who needs to be challenged to stay engaged.

The Yurchenko double pike requires Biles to race down the runway before doing a roundoff/back handspring onto the table followed by two backward flips with her arms clasped behind her knees.

Over the last year, she has mastered it. It became the fifth element named after her in the sport's Code of Points when she did it at the 2023 world championships.

On the surface, she makes it look easy. Underneath, it actually makes her anxious. Power isn't the only thing the YDP requires. Control is important, too. Go in too hard and you might land on your back. Too little, and you come up short and crunch your ankles and just about everything else.

Landi pantomimed “calm down” before Biles saluted the judges, then watched her

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Good Day, Sunshine

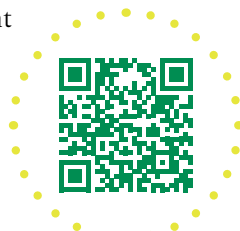


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