

SUMMER OLYMPIC GAMES IN TOKYO



Wally Skalij/Los Angeles Times-TNS

U.S. gymnast Simone Biles is consoled after competing on the vault and withdrawing from competition due to an injury in the women's team final at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics on Tuesday, July 27, 2021, in Tokyo.

Biles withdraws, won't defend all-around title

By Will Graves
AP Sports Writer

TOKYO — Simone Biles will not defend her Olympic title.

The American gymnastics superstar withdrew from Thursday's all-around competition to focus on her mental well-being.

USA Gymnastics said in a statement on Wednesday, July 28 that the 24-year-old is opting to not compete. The decision comes a day after Biles removed herself from the team final following one rotation because she felt she wasn't mentally ready.

Jade Carey, who finished ninth in qualifying, will take Biles' place in the all-around. Carey initially did not qualify because she was the third-ranking American behind Biles and Sunisa Lee. International Gymnastics Federation rules limit countries to two athletes per

event in the finals.

The organization said Biles will be evaluated daily before deciding if she will participate in next week's individual events. Biles qualified for the finals on all four apparatuses, something she didn't even do during her five-medal haul in Rio de Janeiro in 2016.

The 24-year-old came to Tokyo as arguably the face of the Games following the retirement of swimmer Michael Phelps and sprinter Usain Bolt. She topped qualifying on Sunday despite piling up mandatory deductions on vault, floor and beam following shaky dismounts.

She posted on social media on Monday that she felt the weight of the world on her shoulders. The weight became too heavy after vaulting during team finals. She lost herself in mid-air and completed 1 1/2 twists instead of 2 1/2. She consulted with U.S. team

doctor Marcia Faustin before walking off the field of play.

When she returned, she took off her bar grips, hugged teammates Sunisa Lee, Grace McCallum and Jordan Chiles and turned into the team's head cheerleader as the U.S. claimed silver behind the Russian Olympic Committee.

"Once I came out here (to compete), I was like, 'No mental is, not there so I just need to let the girls do it and focus on myself,'" Biles said following the medal ceremony.

The decision opens the door wide open for the all-around, a title that was long considered a foregone conclusion. Rebeca Andrade of Brazil finished second to Biles during qualifying, followed by Lee and Russians Angelina Melnikova and Vladislava Urazova. The four were separated by three-tenths of a point on Sunday.

U.S. men's hoops rebounds by routing Iran, 120-66

By Brian Mahoney
AP Basketball Writer

SAITAMA, Japan — It wasn't just that the U.S. had been losing. It was that the level of play was practically un-American.

Playing passively and passing up open shots isn't the way its players became basketball's best. And when it resulted in them dropping their Olympic opener, the Americans decided to do something about it.

"After that loss we came together," guard Damian Lillard said. "It was a lot of communication between then and now where it's like, 'All right. It's time to start looking like Team USA.'"

Lillard scored 21 points and the Americans got back to winning — and winning easily — with their first victory of these Olympics, romping past Iran 120-66 on Wednesday, July 28.

Devin Booker scored 16 points and Jayson

Tatum had 14 for the Americans, who had their 25-game Olympic winning streak snapped with an 83-76 loss to France on Sunday.

The U.S. not only bounced back but did it in a Dream Team-type performance against an overmatched opponent, racing out for transition dunks and stepping back to knock down 3-pointers.

"We came out with more freedom as individuals and took the shots that we normally take," said Kevin Durant. "And they went in tonight and we guarded up, so it was a good step."

The U.S. plays the Czech Republic on Saturday, July 31 to close pool play, with a victory guaranteeing the Americans a spot in the single-elimination quarterfinals.

The Americans are probably through already thanks to what will be an enormous point differential as a result of this rout.

Ledecky wins another gold

By Paul Newberry
AP Sports Writer

TOKYO — Katie Ledecky will be the first to concede that her standards are almost impossible to meet, especially at this stage of her stellar swimming career.

She always wants to go faster, faster, faster — a singular vision that has carried her to the pinnacle of her sport. Yet it's not really a reasonable goal when you've already done it so many times before.

In the space of a little more than an hour Wednesday, July 28 at the Tokyo Aquatics Centre, Ledecky gained the sort of perspective that could serve other Olympians dealing with increasingly weighty expectations.

First, she experienced a crushing letdown.

Then, she rallied for an exhilarating triumph.

Ledecky had already come up short of gold in her

opening race — the first time that's happened in her three Olympics. To those on the outside, a silver medal in the 400-meter freestyle seemed like a failure.

Ledecky returned to the pool for a rematch in the 200 free with the swimmer who beat her the first time, the Australian star known as the Terminator, Ariarne Titmus.

Titmus pulled away at the end for another gold, just as she did the first time, only it wasn't Ledecky she had to worry about. The 24-year-old American was seventh at the

first flip and never climbed any higher than fifth, which is where she touched at the end.

But there was another race to come, the longest on her program, the 1,500 free.

It wasn't Ledecky's best performance. Her time — 15 minutes, 37.34 seconds — was nearly 17 seconds off the world record she set three summers ago.

But she touched ahead of everyone else to claim the gold, about 4 seconds better than hard-charging teammate Erica Sullivan.



Joanna Mann/Baker City Herald

Artists took to downtown Baker City sidewalks Saturday, July 24, to create chalk art.

Chalk artists brighten Baker City sidewalks

By Joanna Mann
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Art lovers gathered outside of Royal Artisan Saturday morning, July 24, to brighten Main Street sidewalks with chalk creations.

Jessica Dougherty, who has been organizing "Chalk It Up to Art" for the past three years, said the annual event is just a fun way to bring people together and make public art.

Thanks to a grant from the Cultural Trust, Royal Artisan partnered with the Art Guild to put on this free event, with towels, brushes, chalk and wipes included. This

year, new mediums such as liquid chalk and chalk pens were available to make creating art more accessible to people with different skills.

The chalk art is displayed in front of nearly every building on Main Street, but none of it is permanent. It will fade with time or rain — which is in the forecast for this weekend — but is sure to return next summer.

Chalk It Up to Art takes place the weekend after Miners Jubilee every year. Royal Artisan created some chalk art at Miners Jubilee to get people excited for the event.

School board members sworn in

By Joanna Mann
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Jessica Dougherty and Travis Cook were sworn in as members of the Baker 5J School Board during the board's July 22 meeting.

Dougherty and Cook were elected in May to four-year terms.

Chris Hawkins was reelected as chair of the five-member board. Julie Huntington will serve as vice chair for the next year.

During the July 22 meeting, the board heard

a presentation from Peter Fargo and Eric Layton, who are members of a group promoting Baker City applying for a railroad quiet zone, in which freight trains would not sound their horns except in emergencies.

To qualify, the city would need to augment the physical barriers at railroad crossings in the city to prevent vehicles from getting to the tracks while a train is passing.

The board learned that the committee overseeing spending on the \$4 million bond

measure that district voters approved in May had its first meeting July 23.

The board learned that Eagle Cap Innovative High School will be renamed Eagle Cap Innovative Junior/Senior High School to reflect the seventh- and eighth-grade students who attend the school.

The board will meet Aug. 5 at noon, most likely via Zoom, to discuss COVID-19-related policies, including mask rules, for the school year that starts Aug. 30.

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