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Russian Olympic Figure Skating Champion Sotnikova Retires

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Sotnikova clinched Russia's first-ever ladies singles gold at the Sochi Games at the age of 17 in 2014.
Sergei Kiselyov / Moskva News Agency

Russian Olympic figure skating champion Adelina Sotnikova has announced her retirement over health concerns, the state-run TASS news agency reported Monday.

Sotnikova clinched Russia's first-ever ladies singles gold at the Sochi Games at the age of 17 in 2014. The 23-year-old hasn't competed since the 2015 Russian Championships.

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"I'm done with professional sport... because I want to be healthy and happy," TASS quoted Sotnikova as saying on Russian television.

"I want to [compete], but, unfortunately, my health doesn't allow me to," she added.

Sotnikova had undergone cervical spine surgery in February, TASS reported, citing her coach

and her agent.

“Adelina has two implants connected by a [metal] plate in her spine,” Sotnikova’s agent Maria Shashina was quoted as saying.

“This plate is held by six titanium screws screwed into her spine so that she could once again get back on the ice and please her audience,” Shashina added.

Sotnikova’s upset victory in 2014 was surrounded by controversy when South Korea filed a complaint asking the International Skating Union to look into allegations of bias in the judging panel. The ISU dismissed the complaint.

Sotnikova announced her retirement less than a week after Russian tennis star and five-time grand slam winner Maria Sharapova announced hers at age 32.

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