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Russian Women Win Olympics Gymnastics Team Final After Biles Exit

By AFP

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The Russian gymnastics team, led by Angelina Melinikova. **Loic Venance / AFP**

Russia's women gymnastics team capitalized on the dramatic departure of Simone Biles from the U.S. team to win the Olympic title on Tuesday.

The U.S. team withdrew Biles from the final after a disappointing opening vault and Russia went on to beat the champions from the last two Games by more than three points.

Britain took a surprise bronze medal.

Led by Angelina Melnikova, the Russians emulated their men's team who won gold 24 hours earlier.

Competing under a neutral banner due to their country's doping suspension, Russia was ending a sequence of domination by the U.S. women in world and Olympic finals stretching back to 2011.

But the main focus of attention at the Ariake Gymnastics Centre was Biles, who arrived at the Tokyo Games with hopes of bettering the Olympic gymnastics record of golds for a single competitor, held by Soviet great Larisa Latynina.

After leaving the competition floor momentarily, Biles returned having been dropped from the three concluding rotations and cheered on her teammates.

USA Gymnastics said in a statement she had been withdrawn from the final because of an unspecified "medical issue" and would be assessed daily to determine whether she can continue in the Games.

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