Twitter Thread by Solnishko



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Happy birthday to Yelena Shevchenko!

As a child Yelena was very trusting. She was friendly with other kids but lived a bit in her own world. She had a good memory which helped her a lot at school. By nature a creative person and an eternal optimist, she had many interests and strove for perfection in each.

She could have easily become an actress, model, translator, but destiny brought 7 year old Yelena to Moscow CSKA where she fell in love with gymnastics and found friends & mentors. Her first coaches were Viktor and Irina Razumovskiy.

Soon the mere fascination with gymnastics ended & 5 years of hard work began, plus the will to achieve serious results. More than once she was tempted to quit, but persisted. She perfected her characteristic expression on floor which bewitched the judges & spectators alike.

She had many competitors at CSKA and later at Vatutinki to keep her driven including Gurova, later Chudina and Baraksanova along with others. She competed for the Armed Forces team and first made the national team at 12.

Her 1st international success was 1983 Druzhba Spartakiad in Hungary where she was 3rd. At 1985 Moscow News she competed exhibition but her score was high enough for 5th place.

The same year at Druzhba in Poland she got two 10s and won gold FX, bronze V & AA, outstripping her future constant rival and team mate, Laschenova. 1986 was a great year, winning a bunch of medals at USSR Champs & Cup.

At the final selection for the 1988 Olympic team, Yelena won the AA ahead of future Olympic champions: Boginskaya, Lashchenova, Chudina, Strazheva, Baitova and reserve Omelyanchik. She of course made the Olympic team.

In Seoul the USSR team was one of the youngest with average age of 16 and became Olympic champions. USSR gymnasts won 11 gold, 6 silver & 3 bronze at the Games. Shevchenko was 14th in AA QF, ranked 9th V, 28th UB, 14th BB & 17th FX

She won gold AA at the 1998 USSR Spartakiade over Strazheva, Gurova, Bicherova, Omelyanchik, Shchennikova & Lashchenova. The new Olympic cycle began well, winning medals at Moscow News and USA vs USSR.

She made the 1989 Worlds Team and was selected to tour Australia where the team apparently performed 27 times. Sadly the same year, injuries lead to her leaving the sport.

Shevchenko graduated from the Russian State University of Physical Culture, Sports, Youth and Tourism in 1992. She could have got a good job overseas but decided to stay in Russia where she coached at CSKA and began studying to be a judge.

At first she worked alongside her coaches the Razumovskiys, then after their departure to work in Japan in 1993 she began coaching her younger club mate, Dina Kochetkova who managed to achieve the highest results at world and European competition.

She also coached Svetlana Feofanova who became one of Russia's best pole vaulters after switching from gymnastics.

Here is Svetlana Feofanova performing on UB on a Russian TV show in 2016!
https://t.co/08Ff9XPCGN