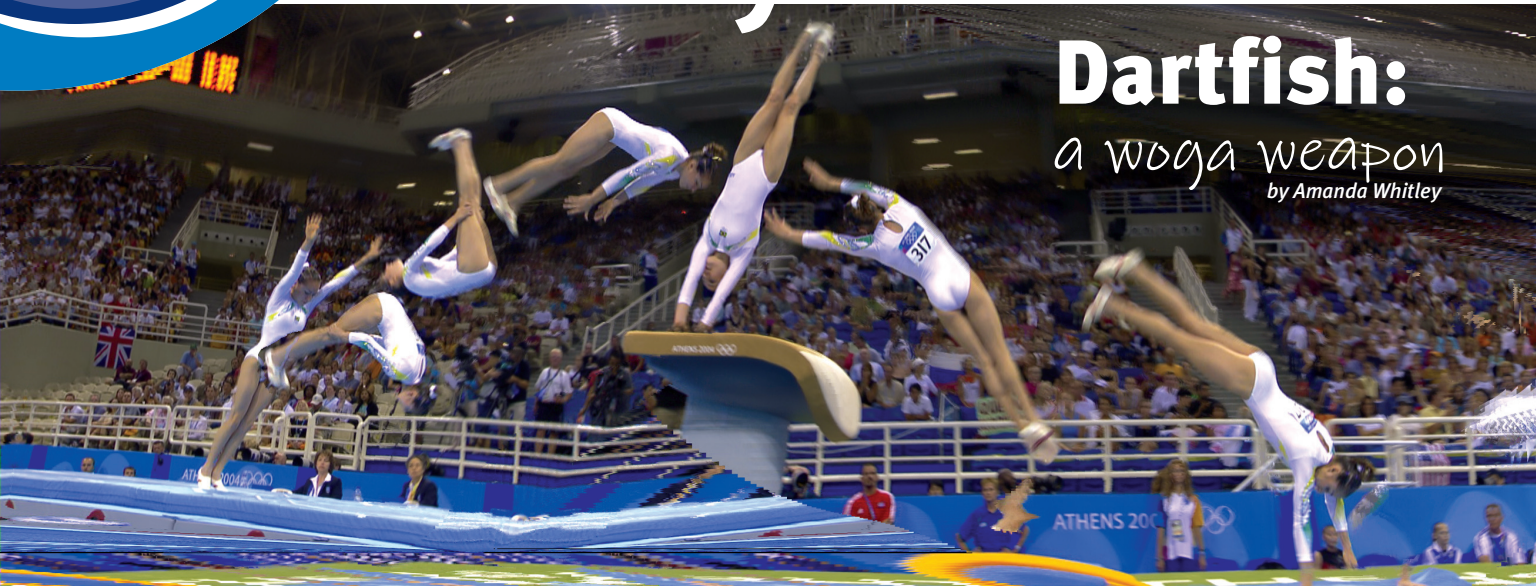


Dartfish:

a woga weapon
by Amanda Whitley



With the two most recent female Olympic Champions hailing from WOGA gymnastics out of Texas, the gym boasts one of the most high-profile elite programs not only in the country, but in the world. Co-owners Yevgeny Marchenko and Valeri Liukin coached Carly Patterson and Nastia Liukin, respectively, to Olympic gold following their own successful competitive careers. While it's impossible to encapsulate the gym's keys to success in a quick synopsis, we did discover one of the program's secret weapons: Dartfish. The technology allows the gym to manipulate video in a variety of ways to breakdown skills and routines to really study the technique and evaluate where corrections should be made. We caught up with Valeri Liukin for a quick chat about the innovative software and how he uses it.

ON SOME OF THE WAYS LIUKIN USES THE TECHNOLOGY ...

[A good example is] when I actually stand under the bars and spot and teach [an athlete]. When I spot, I don't see much because I'm under the bar. At competitions, I'm always under the bar [spotting for safety]. But when you do that, you really don't see anything. You don't see much of the mistakes... It means the world for me that I have this program. You can do the slow mo, you can repeat, you can do a one on one, you can copy, you can compare. [There are] endless possibilities with this product. I've never seen anything like it.

Rebecca [Bross] does [a Yurchenko double full on vault]. I can put [two different performances of the same vault] back-to-back and one-on-one to see what she's doing wrong. It's good — not just for elite coaches, but for anybody. ... From the professional levels to the beginning levels, you can see the problems, see who is doing what and compare.

I use it a lot especially when we get into the routines for a competition. We use it

on the tumbling...to break apart [long passes]. If there is an error in a combination, you can't see it because everything happens fast and quick. But every angle in a takeoff position is very, very crucial and if you miss that, the whole pass can stop on the first skill. So that's where it comes very handy because you can see the whole skill and what's going on from the beginning all the way through the end.

ON HOW HE USED THE PROGRAM WITH NASTIA ...

It's so helpful in the higher levels so they can see. ... If you remember Nastia, she had 25-27 [elements in her routine]. It's very, very important to see that from the side. If I don't see it from the side, I can't help her much. So we always use it to analyze that. ... Nastia's routines are very, very complicated, even for me at times! And when things go wrong, we have to find the answers and that's not always easy in such complicated routines, especially on bars. ... I need to see the mistakes before they come. A good coach can prevent mistakes. It's not about dealing with them and wasting time to break apart an old skill and fix it and do it again. Sometimes that's impossible. But with this program, I can see what's been done in the past and see the differences right away when I put it back-to-back.

ON WHAT HE FINDS MOST HELPFUL WITH THE CURRENT CODE ...

The important thing right now is the combinations, so it's floor and bars. On bars, it's been an incredible change. And in floor, my athletes do three passes versus four passes on the floor. Because we're doing combinations, we get our bonuses that way. For example, in the Olympic Games, Nastia did handspring front full, punch double and she was the first one in the world. It's a very, very big skill. Shawn Johnson did a double double. Believe it or not, Nastia's passes were worth a lot more than Shawn's double double. That's how I work. I work differently and I build combination passes. You can see in Rebecca's routine, she doesn't need to do four passes. She does so many combination passes. It has to come from a lot of work on those combinations and I have to watch a lot.

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