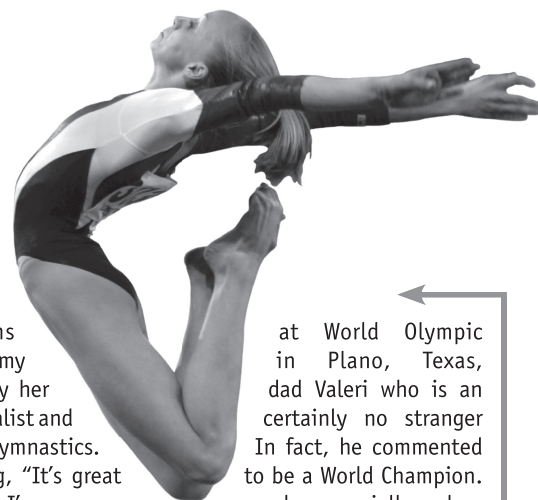




# NASTIA *Liukin*



Nastia Liukin balanced her way from Junior to Senior National Champion to World Champion on bars and beam at the 2005 World Championships in Australia this past November. She also grabbed the silver medal in the all-around and on floor exercise in her first World Championships competition.

Chellsie Memmel and Liukin had a one-two finish in the all-around, which turned out to be the closest World Championships finish since 1985 when there was a tie for first! Memmel scored 37.824 to Liukin's 37.823 – just .001 points separated the two gymnasts.

Winning four World Championships medals at age 16 is certainly an accomplishment to shout about. Liukin commented on winning the all-around silver medal, saying, "It feels great. I've been working really hard for this so it's great to get the silver medal. To get a reward for all the training I have done, that's really good."

Liukin trains at World Olympic Gymnastics Academy in Plano, Texas, and is coached by her dad Valeri who is an Olympic gold medalist and certainly no stranger to international gymnastics. In fact, he commented on her win saying, "It's great to be a World Champion. It's the pinnacle. I'm very, very proud, especially when it's my baby."

Nastia Liukin summed it up best saying, "Four medals at a World Championships, there is nothing else I can ask for."

This high school junior may receive even more accolades in the days to come since she is a nominee for the *USA Today's* and the United States Sports Academy's 2005 Athlete of the Year award. Look for more great news to come on Nastia Liukin!