

Rhythmic Gymnastics Coach Iryna Bielkina's Athletes Sweep the Podium at the American Championship in Miami

Three athletes trained by the same coach took first, second, and third place among 72 competitors a rare achievement in rhythmic gymnastics.

MIAMI, FL, UNITED STATES, August 11, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Athletes trained by rhythmic gymnastics coach Iryna Bielkina swept the podium at the American Championship, held in Miami, Florida, taking first, second, and third place among 72 competitors from clubs across the country.

Zhuban Azhar finished first, Gasparyan Nicole placed second, and Gu Avery took third, giving Bielkina's program, California Rhythms, all three spots on the podium in their category. The result placed the entire top of the field under the guidance of a single coach, a distinction rarely achieved at a competition of this size. A podium sweep by athletes trained under one coach is considered rare in rhythmic gymnastics, a sport in which dozens of clubs typically compete for a limited number of medal positions in each category. The American Championship draws gymnasts from clubs and regions nationwide, with athletes competing across multiple age divisions and apparatus routines judged on difficulty, execution, and artistic expression. The format requires consistency across several rounds, meaning a single strong routine is rarely enough to secure a podium finish.

Rhythmic gymnastics combines elements of dance, ballet, and gymnastics, with athletes performing choreographed routines using apparatus such as hoop, ball, clubs, ribbon, and rope. Routines are scored by a panel of certified judges based on technical difficulty, execution, and artistic presentation, with results determined across multiple rounds of competition.

Each of the three athletes progressed through the competition with routines that combined



Iryna Bielkina with her students after the awards ceremony.

technical difficulty with consistent execution, factors that judges weigh alongside artistic presentation when scoring rhythmic gymnastics routines. Preparation for the competition included conditioning, repetition of technical elements, and development of the choreographic and artistic components required at the national level.

Results of this kind are more commonly associated with large, well-established regional or national training programs. A sweep of the podium by athletes representing a single, smaller club is considered a notable outcome within the sport's competitive landscape.

"I'm thrilled with this result," said Iryna Bielkina, head coach at California Rhythms. "Every athlete performed admirably and was rewarded for her hard work. This is the outcome of a full season of discipline, patience, and trust between the athletes and the coaching staff. Watching all three of them stand on the podium together was an incredibly proud moment for me and for the entire club. We're not stopping here — summer and preparation for the new 2027 season are ahead of us, and we intend to build on this momentum."

Bielkina has more than 10 years of experience coaching rhythmic gymnastics and leads the program at California Rhythms, where she works with athletes across multiple age and skill divisions. Over the course of her career, she has overseen the development of athletes competing at the regional and national level.

Following the championship, the athletes and coaching staff at California Rhythms are set to begin preparations for the 2027 competitive season, with training scheduled to resume this summer. The club plans to build on the results achieved in Miami as part of its ongoing development program for competitive rhythmic gymnastics.

The American Championship remains one of the most closely watched national-level events on the rhythmic gymnastics calendar, drawing athletes and clubs from across the United States each year. Results from the competition are often factored into how athletes and clubs plan their participation in subsequent regional, national, and qualifying events, though specific selection processes vary by governing body and division.

California Rhythms
California rhythmic gymnastics club
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