

General Information

Country:	FRA
Gender:	F
Handedness:	Right-handed
Date of birth:	1988-04-01
License:	01041988002

Further Personal Information

Residence	France
Occupation	Athlete, Student
Languages	English, French
Higher education	Commercial Studies, Marketing - University Paris-Est Marne-la-Vallee: France

Sport Specific Information

When and where did you begin this sport?	She began fencing with a foil at age seven in Strasbourg, France, after her mother signed her older brother up for a sports camp and she went along too. "It really was pure coincidence. I was accompanying my big brother who was going to a sports camp. On the last day there was a fencing competition. I beat all the boys and the course director, who was also a fencing master, went to my mother to tell her that I might have potential and that he would like to train me. Right away, I loved this sport and its fighting spirit."
Why this sport?	In 1998 she switched from foil to sabre. "I started with foil in 1996 because the women's sabre did not exist at the time. The female sabre appeared in 1998 and I immediately switched to it because it corresponded much more to my personality and my character. Sabre was more explosive, more dynamic, and so I stopped using the foil, which required too much precision for me. I was much better with the blade and suddenly [three years later] I followed with my first national title. Honestly, if I had persevered with the foil, it would not have been so great for me because, even today, when we switch weapons for fun, I'm still not very gifted."
Club / Team	Strasbourg Universite Club [SUC]: France
Training Regime	She trains at the National Institute for Sport, Expertise and Performance [INSEP] in Paris, France.
Handedness	Right

General Interest

Nicknames	Chachou, Granny [because she is one of the older members of the French team]. (Facebook page, 10 Jun 2018; lalsace.fr, 09 Jan 2013)
Hobbies	Supporting French football team RC Strasbourg. (sporticolore.fr, 06 Apr 2022)
Memorable sporting achievement	Winning silver in team sabre at the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo. (france3-regions.francetvinfo.fr, 24 Dec 2021)
Hero / Idol	US tennis player Serena Williams, French footballer Zinedine Zidane. (sporticolore.fr, 06 Apr 2022)
Injuries	In 2021 she tore ligaments in her right thumb. She was able to recover in time to compete at the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo. (france3-regions.francetvinfo.fr, 24 Dec 2021) In late 2018 she injured her ankle and was out of action until February 2019. (SportsDeskOnline, 01 Jun 2019; lalsace.fr, 25 Mar 2019; larep.fr, 11 Mar 2019)
Sporting philosophy / motto	"Fencing can be compared to a game of chess - you have to be one step ahead, you have to be a strategist, and you have to always be toying with your opponent. 'Play with my qualities and my opponent's faults' - that's an approach that I still use today." (pokaa.fr, 10 Jan 2021)
Awards and honours	In 2021 she was named Knight of the National Order of Merit by the French government. (legifrance.gouv.fr, 08 Sep 2021) In 2021 she was named Best Individual Sportsperson of the Alsace region in France by the French Sports Journalists Union [UJSF]. (francebleu.fr, 31 Dec 2021)
Ambitions	To win gold at the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris. (byathlete.com, 13 Jul 2020)
Other information	<p>RIO 2016 DISAPPOINTMENT In 2020 she revealed that she had almost quit fencing after failing to win a medal at the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro. She only returned to the national team after agreeing to train and compete part-time. "After the [2016] Games, it was a very difficult period. All year, we had made podiums and won medals. We were almost used to it. But in Rio, we took a hit because it was a scenario that we had not planned for. We weren't ready to accept what happened. I already had it in my head the idea that if I became an Olympic champion, I would stop fencing. A month-and-a-half after the Games, when all I had was the desire to be alone and not to hear about sport, the coaches asked me to rejoin the training group. I told them no, and that if I came back, it would be on my terms. I didn't want to do fencing exclusively. I wanted to go to work two days a week." (byathlete.com, 13 Jul 2020)</p> <p>MENTAL WORK In 2020 she said she had been working on improving her mental approach to fencing. "I am a very powerful and very explosive person, and not at all patient. When there is a problem, I like the solution to be found quickly, and inevitably things go wrong when I and my coach cannot find it. This is when I have to channel this explosiveness and envy. Thanks to my mental trainer, I am looking for the tools to refocus on myself and to do mental visualisation in particular. Fencing is a tactical game and you have to succeed in trapping the other when you are facing an obstacle." (besidesport.com, 01 Sep 2020)</p> <p>EARLY DAYS AND LEAVING HOME At age 17 she moved from her hometown of Strasbourg to pursue elite fencing training at the National Institute for Sport, Expertise and Performance [INSEP] in Paris. "I was in high school in Strasbourg and I was given an ultimatum, which was that if I did not join the French national training group now, I would never join. My mother took all the steps to get me to go, but for my part, I wanted to focus on my final high school exams. I had no choice and I went reluctantly. In addition, when I arrived, the atmosphere, especially between the youngest and the oldest, was not very welcoming. I failed my high school exams that year because I was no longer going to class and I was a bit depressed. I arrived in the Parisian suburbs with people I did not know, and that year was very hard. The following years, things got better, but I made myself a promise never to subject what I had undergone to other newcomers at INSEP. Instead, I welcome them with open arms and I make sure that their integration goes well." (besidesport.com, 01 Sep 2020)</p>