

General Information

Country:	UKR
Gender:	F
Handedness:	Right-handed
Date of birth:	1990-09-04
License:	04091990000

Further Personal Information

Family	Partner Luigi Samele
Residence	Bologna, ITA
Occupation	Athlete
Languages	English, Russian, Ukrainian
Higher education	Coaching - Admiral Makarov National University of Shipbuilding: Mykolayiv, UKR

Sport Specific Information

When and where did you begin this sport?	She began fencing at age 10 in Mykolayiv, Ukraine.
Why this sport?	She was doing dancing but it was expensive for her parents. Her godfather, a fencing coach, then encouraged her to switch sports.
Club / Team	Virtus Scherma Bologna: Italy
Name of coach	Andrea Terenzio [club, national], ITA; Yevgeniy Statsenko [national], UKR
Training Regime	Her training programme includes her coach setting mental challenges at the end of a session, including balancing stones on top of one another without them falling. The challenges are designed to prepare her for the rapid decision-making needed when tired in the midst of a competition.
Handedness	Right

General Interest	
Nicknames	Olya (1plus1.ua, 07 Oct 2021)
Hobbies	Snowboarding. (noc-ukr.org, 13 Jul 2021)
Memorable sporting achievement	Winning gold in team sabre at the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing. (Athlete, 09 Jun 2019)
Most influential person in career	Her parents. (redbull.com, 23 Jul 2019)
Hero / Idol	US fencer Mariel Zagunis. (1plus1.ua, 07 Oct 2021)
Injuries	She underwent shoulder surgery following the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro. (redbullcontentpool.com, 10 Apr 2020)
Sporting philosophy / motto	"I always treat my rivals with respect. Before we go out onto the piste, we can be friends, talk, and on the strip we fight to the last, to show who is stronger." (xsport.ua, 26 May 2018)
Awards and honours	<p>She was named Female Athlete of the Year at the Ukrainian Heroes of Sport Awards in 2017, 2016, 2014, and 2009. (noc-ukr.org, 05 Apr 2018, 31 Mar 2017, 08 Apr 2015; glavred.info, 08 Apr 2010)</p> <p>In recognition of her sporting achievements, she has received the Orders of Princess Olga [first, second, and third class] and the Orders for Merit [first, second, and third class] in Ukraine. (president.gov.ua, 07 Mar 2018, 25 Jul 2013)</p> <p>She has received the title of Honoured Master of Sport in Ukraine. (mms.gov.ua, 01 Jun 2023)</p>
Milestones	Her bronze medal in individual sabre at the 2012 Olympic Games in London meant she became the first fencer representing Ukraine to win more than one Olympic medal. She had previously won gold in team sabre at the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing. She went on to become the first Ukrainian fencer to win three and four Olympic medals with a silver in team sabre and bronze in individual sabre at the 2016 Games in Rio de Janeiro. (SportsDeskOnline, 05 May 2021)
Famous relatives	Her partner Luigi Samele has represented Italy in fencing. He won silver medals in both individual and team sabre at the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo, and bronze in team sabre at the 2012 Games in London. (SportsDeskOnline, 07 Apr 2022; 1plus1.ua, 07 Oct 2021)
Ambitions	To win individual gold at the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris. "It'll probably be my last Olympics and I want to enjoy it." (theguardian.com, 17 Sep 2023; FIE Instagram profile, 27 Jul 2020)
Other information	<p>TRAINING ARRANGEMENT In 2022 she and her partner Luigi Samele, an Italian fencer, helped to organise for several Ukrainian fencers to train at the Virtus Scherma Bologna club in Italy. "I was just a link between our athletes and the Virtus Scherma club, as well as Gigi [Samele], who together with other Italian athletes organised a fundraiser to help Ukrainian fencers. It is clear that this is not forever. However, I am sure that while we are here the club will do everything possible to make us feel at home." (xsport.ua, 15 Jun 2022; bolognatoday.it, 13 May 2022)</p> <p>BARBIE ROLE MODEL In 2020 she was chosen as the inspiration for a fencer doll as part of the Barbie Role Models project. The initiative aimed to highlight the success of women in various fields and encourage girls to realise such goals. "As a little girl, I always dreamed of having a Barbie doll [of herself] and I had one, like most girls. But I couldn't imagine that some day I would become a Barbie doll myself. I'm so glad that I was able to inspire the legendary brand to create this beauty." (footballua.tv, 05 Mar 2020; Instagram profile, 04 Mar 2020)</p> <p>DANCE BACKGROUND She believes the dancing lessons she had as a child proved good preparation for a career in fencing. "When you're in the rhythm of music, it's similar to the rhythm of fencing, the rhythm of a partner to the rhythm of an opponent. Sometimes you can see some dancing moves in fencing, too." In 2021 she featured on the Ukrainian version of the TV show 'Dancing with the Stars'. (aroged.com, 12 Aug 2021; redbull.com, 29 Jan 2021)</p> <p>OTHER ACTIVITIES She has served as a member of the International Fencing Federation [FIE] Athletes' Commission. She has also been a member of the Athletes' Commission of the National Olympic Committee of Ukraine. (fie.org, 01 Aug 2020; noc-ukr.org, 01 Aug 2020)</p>