

General Information

Country:	FRA
Gender:	F
Handedness:	Right-handed
Date of birth:	1989-12-13
License:	13121989000

Further Personal Information

Family	One daughter [2022]
Occupation	Athlete, Journalist, Public Speaker
Languages	French
Higher education	Journalism - School of Journalism [ESJ] Paris: France

Sport Specific Information

When and where did you begin this sport?	She began fencing at age seven at the Fencing Club Quimper Cornouaille [EQC] in France. She was the only female member of the club at the time, which she believes helped her develop faster in her youth. "I was never treated as a girl. We fought as equals, which pushed me higher."
Why this sport?	Her mother enrolled her in several sports clubs so that she could burn off excess energy. Climbing was her first passion, but after her local club became fully booked, her mother encouraged her to try fencing. "My mother nicknamed me 'the goat' when I was a child, because I loved climbing on everything. I wanted to go climbing, but there was no more room in the club. It was my mother who then told me about fencing - she had seen it on TV. I started with the sabre - the most explosive weapon. I have always had a fighting spirit and I was, in addition, with the boys, so it allowed me to be immediately challenged, and I had a great time."
Club / Team	Cercle d'Esgrime Orleanais: France
Training Regime	She trains at the National Institute for Sport, Expertise and Performance [INSEP] in Paris, France. "Physically, [to be an elite fencer], there is a lot of ground support work to be done, so you have to have very light feet, a bit like a sprinter. We also do a lot of weight training to be explosive, and I add yoga and meditation, in addition to working with my mental trainer."
Handedness	Right

General Interest	
Nicknames	Cec (Facebook profile, 09 Jun 2015)
Hobbies	Qigong, yoga, reading, meditation. (francetvinfo.fr, 18 Mar 2020)
Memorable sporting achievement	Winning silver in the team sabre event at the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo. (actu.fr, 20 Sep 2021)
Hero / Idol	French fencer Brice Guyart. (ablock.fr, 11 Dec 2020)
Injuries	In March 2011 she suffered from compartment syndrome in her right forearm. (escrime-ffe.fr, 24 Mar 2011)
Sporting philosophy / motto	"Fencing is a total sport that works from the feet to the brain. All the muscles in the body are pumping. But, at the top level, the best muscle to work on is your mind, because this is what's going to make the difference. Technically and tactically, everyone is more or less equal at elite level - everyone is capable of winning a competition. But being able to make the right choices at the right time - that's another thing. In this sport, the real difference is in the head. The best asset of a fencer is to be convinced of your choices and to have confidence in what your actions will achieve." (ablock.fr, 11 Dec 2020; lemonde.fr, 07 Jul 2019)
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)
Ambitions	To compete at the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris. (ouest-france.fr, 01 Dec 2021)
Other information	<p>DATE WITH DESTINY IN PARIS In March 2024 her selection for the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris was confirmed, and she believes she has a date with destiny in Paris as she will compete on the day of her late mother's birthday [29 July]. Her mother passed away in 2022 just several months after Cecilia gave birth to her daughter. "I feel like it's a sign, as if my mother will be there in Paris, and I will be there too. She will be with me, she is with me every day, I don't know where but she is there. I am especially lucky to have my daughter supporting me now, she is my guardian angel, my most important armour. With her, I feel invincible. The 29th of July [2024] will be a magical date." However, she said qualifying for Paris 2024 was harder than Tokyo 2020 or Rio 2016. "It was tiring. It was not as smooth as Rio, where I qualified automatically thanks to my points, and Tokyo. My body was tired from this long year, this Olympic race has been quite different. I've had a lot of nightmares about it, imagining all the different scenarios. I just had to hang on until it was official." (francebleu.fr, 29 Mar 2024; ouest-france.fr, 29 Mar 2024)</p> <p>BECOMING A MOTHER AND LOSING HERS She took a break from sport after the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo to start a family, and gave birth to her first child in 2022. Several months later, her mother Patricia passed away. Her parents ran a restaurant and bar in Quimper, France, called 'The Sabre' in honour of their daughter. "It was a turbulent time, in such a short space of time we learnt about life and death. I'm not the same person as I was in Tokyo [at the 2020 Olympic Games]. I feel like I've aged 20 years." After a maternity break, she returned to competition in October 2022. "I recovered quickly from giving birth, but what takes time is to rediscover your fighting instinct, that sort of killer instinct, after being in the nurturing world [of motherhood]. It was about understanding why I am here, finding reason for everything, becoming a mother and then losing my own mother, finding sense and direction took some time." (francebleu.fr, 29 Mar 2024; ouest-france.fr, 24 May 2019)</p> <p>MEDITATION She has practised meditation since 2015, and credits it with helping to improve the consistency of her results. "In 2015, I had just turned 25. I loved my sport and my results were good, but very inconsistent. I could make it to the final one weekend and lose miserably in the first round the following week. It was very hard to take, my morale was on a roller coaster ride. I felt that I had to find an inner calm. I'm pretty hyperactive, I wanted to be in the fight all the time. Sitting on a chair, doing nothing, seemed impossible to me. But I wanted to grow up, and not just for fencing. I wanted to be able to do things at my own pace, maybe slower, maybe faster, but at least be in control of my time and my emotions. I knew it wasn't by holding a sword that I would get there. It had to happen inside. It was at this time that my mental trainer made me aware of meditation. By focusing on my breathing and consciously performing an action as mundane and harmless as getting air into my body, I felt like I was taking the reins back." (lemonde.fr, 07 Jul 2019)</p> <p>EARLY DAYS When she started fencing at age seven, she was the only girl in her club. "For me, it wasn't weird to be the only girl - I didn't even think about it. I had one arm, two legs, a mask and a sword like them. It is true that the boys looked at me, made fun of me a little. I did not understand why. In fact, it's because I was the only girl. Today, I compete in a team, a female team, but I never thought in terms of the boy/girl differences, maybe because I grew up with two brothers. Today, compared to 20 years ago, there are as many</p>