

General Information

Country:	IND
Gender:	F
Height:	163
Weight:	58
Handedness:	Right-handed
Date of birth:	1993-08-27
Education:	B.A.
Profession:	Student
License:	27081993000

Further Personal Information

Residence	Orléans, FRA
Occupation	Athlete
Languages	English, Hindi, Malayalam, Tamil
Higher education	Business Administration - Government Brennen College: Thalassery, IND

Sport Specific Information

When and where did you begin this sport?	She began fencing in 2004 at school in Chennai, India. She fenced with bamboo sticks until her first national event used electronic equipment. "[At school] they gave me six sport options including fencing. All the other options were filled by the time I joined and I was left with fencing. It sounded new to me and I was eager to try it. Many didn't even know fencing existed in India then. It was a very new sport, especially to Tamil Nadu."
Why this sport?	"Initially I chose fencing to get away from classes in school. But when I lost my first competition, I was determined to win. The sport itself is an inspiration. It gives me happiness and motivates to be better every day."
Club / Team	Christian Bauer Academy: Orléans, FRA
Name of coach	Christian Bauer [club]
Training Regime	In 2021 she began training at the Christian Bauer Academy in Orleans, France. "It is pretty much like a school where we practise from 09:00 to 16:00 from Monday to Friday. In France, the fencing style is quite different - right from the guard position, the way we hold the sabre, movements, parries. It's a lot more elegant, technical, needs quicker reflexes and is tougher to execute."
Handedness	Right

General Interest

Memorable sporting achievement	Winning bronze in individual sabre at the 2023 Asian Championships in Wuxi, People's Republic of China, and competing at the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo. (indianexpress.com, 22 Jun 2023; Facebook page, 11 Oct 2021)
Most influential person in career	Her parents. (The Better India Instagram profile, 20 Jun 2023)
Hero / Idol	US fencer Mariel Zagunis, Indian tennis player Sania Mirza, US tennis player Serena Williams. (bhavanidevi.com, 24 Mar 2020; ibnlive.in.com, 06 May 2013)
Sporting philosophy / motto	"Success won't come in a day. You have to be patient and continue to work really hard. More importantly, you must crave and love your sport." (beboldpeople.com, 04 Nov 2016)
Awards and honours	In November 2021 she was presented with the Arjuna Award in India. (shethepeople.tv, 15 Nov 2021)
Milestones	She became the first fencer to represent India at the Olympic Games when she participated at the 2020 Games in Tokyo. (SportsDeskOnline, 18 Sep 2021; onmanorama.com, 17 Sep 2021)
Other information	<p>CHANGE OF COACH After Italian coach Nicola Zanotti revealed he would be unable to continue coaching her ahead of the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris, she began working with Christian Bauer in Orleans, France, in 2021. "Everyone in fencing knows Bauer. It was actually Nicola who wanted me to train with Bauer. It's a great opportunity for me to train under such a legendary coach. The zumba and balance beam sessions were new for me. But besides this, his style of fencing is very different. It's a little hard to get his style, but I'm enjoying it. Coach Bauer, who is 70, comes in at 08:00 in the morning for a 09:00 session and leaves after most of us. He's a legend, and I'm lucky he agreed to train me. I believe I'm a better fencer now [2023] than I was in Tokyo [at the 2020 Olympic Games]. My style and way of fencing has changed. I understand fencing as a game, much better now. The basics are the same: attack, defence. But how you attack is different: which moment you choose to attack differs from coach to coach." (indianexpress.com, 22 Jun 2023; espn.com, 08 Feb 2022; sportstar.thehindu.com, 11 Jan 2022; firstpost.com, 26 Oct 2021)</p> <p>CHOOSING SABRE She says she focused on the sabre discipline because she enjoys the speed of competition. "When I was explained the sport at first, I was told sabre was the fastest among the three disciplines of fencing. It's a discipline where we move fast and hit the opponents first, or if the opponent attacks first you have to defend quickly. I actually started doing epee because at my first competition in school, they already had enough players in the other disciplines. I lost. After that I started to take an interest in foil and sabre. The second fastest discipline is the foil, so I chose both foil and sabre in the beginning. I still love competing in foil, but after competing in the discipline for four-and-a-half years, India's fencing federation made a rule that one fencer can only compete in one event. So I chose sabre, which I always wanted to do." (firstpost.com, 24 Aug 2020)</p> <p>TIME ABROAD Before she trained with Christian Bauer in France, she worked with Nicola Zanotti in Livorno, Italy, from 2016 to 2021, and she has also spent time with coach Edward Korfanty at the Oregon Fencing Alliance in the United States of America. "Getting trained abroad helped me to improve my fencing skills, apart from making me a better person. Training with the best athletes has been a learning experience for me. I got to know how they take success and failures and prepare for competitions. I was always good at adapting to new situations. That helped me to understand the Italian style of fencing, which is a very tactical form of sabre. It's difficult to learn but I was able to learn it quickly." (espn.com, 08 Feb 2022; indiatimes.com, 16 Sep 2020; bhavanidevi.com, 24 Mar 2020; gofundme.com, 02 Apr 2015)</p> <p>FURTHER EDUCATION She has studied for a master of business administration [MBA] degree from St. Joseph's College of Engineering in Chennai, India, and she has also studied at Kalinga Institute of Industrial Technology. (Kalinga TV YouTube channel, 10 Aug 2022; bhavanidevi.com, 24 Mar 2020)</p>