

General Information

Country:	USA
Gender:	M
Height:	173
Weight:	61
Handedness:	Left-handed
Date of birth:	1993-04-17
License:	17041993004

Further Personal Information

Family	Partner Ysaora Thibus
Occupation	Athlete, Model
Languages	English

Sport Specific Information

When and where did you begin this sport?	He began fencing at age nine.
Why this sport?	"I was in a park in Atlanta [in Georgia, United States of America] playing with a sword. I had always loved anything to do with knights, and someone came up to my parents and said, 'Hey, he should be fencing'. They took me to a club when I was eight but I was too young, so I made them take me back when I was nine."
Training Regime	He added running to his training programme during the COVID-19 pandemic. "Lockdown hit when I was staying with my physical trainer in California. The gyms were closed and we were dying to get back to moving but there was also an urge to do something different. Suddenly, it was, 'Let me try this thing that I'm awful at'. And then I committed myself to it. I thought this is a way for me to get into that space where there's pain and an urge to advance."
Handedness	Left

International Debut

Year	2009
Competing for	United States

General Interest

Nicknames	The Face of Fencing (teamusa.org, 19 Oct 2015)
Hobbies	Music, DJing, the arts. (fashionweekdaily.com, 10 Apr 2020; teamusa.org, 10 Sep 2016)
Most influential person in career	Coach Jed Dupree. (Athlete, 30 Nov 2011)
Hero / Idol	US basketballer Michael Jordan. (olympicchannel.com, 01 Jan 2016)
Sporting philosophy / motto	"Fencing is the best sport in the world because it's a mix of both the mental and physical." (olympicchannel.com, 01 Feb 2016)
Other sports	During his youth he won a state championship in BMX racing in the United States of America. (teamusa.org, 10 Sep 2016)
Milestones	<p>He was a member of the team that claimed the United States of America's first gold medal in men's team foil at the world championships, with victory at the 2019 edition in Budapest, Hungary. (SportsDeskOnline, 05 Jul 2022)</p> <p>In the 2014/15 season he became the first US male athlete to win an overall World Cup title in fencing. (teamusa.org, 05 Aug 2015)</p>
Famous relatives	His partner Ysaora Thibus has represented France in fencing. She won a silver medal in team foil at the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo. (gqmagazine.fr, 09 Mar 2022; SportsDeskOnline, 18 Apr 2022; pianetascherma.com, 31 May 2020; rti.fr, 09 May 2019; instyle.com, 16 Jan 2018)
Other information	<p>PROTEST PROBATION In August 2019 he was placed on 12-month probation by the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee after he took a knee on the medal podium during the ceremony for the team foil event at the 2019 Pan American Games in Lima, Peru. "The reason that I knelt at an international competition is because the country that I represent doesn't reflect me anymore. It doesn't reflect the people within it and, as a person who is not of colour, not affected by gun violence or necessarily dealing with immigration right now, it's important for me to have a voice and support those people." In 2020 he was announced as a member of the Team USA Council on Racial and Social Justice, on its protests and demonstrations steering committee. He has also served on the athlete council of Everytown, an anti-gun violence organisation. At the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo he was seen on the podium with an 'X' symbol drawn on his hand. "The X is a symbol of solidarity. Some of the athletes communicated and decided upon this symbol to show solidarity for each other and support the oppressed. For me I personally wore the symbol as a demonstration against Rule 50 [of the Olympic Charter, which prohibits athletes from protesting politically at the Games]." (edition.cnn.com, 04 Aug 2021; theguardian.com, 01 Sep 2020; olympics.nbcsports.com, 28 Aug 2020; fashionweekdaily.com, 10 Apr 2020; bbc.co.uk, 22 Aug 2019; Twitter profile, 10 Aug 2019)</p> <p>FENCING COUPLE He met his partner, French fencer Ysaora Thibus, at the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro. She moved to the United States of America to live with him in 2017. "Becoming an Olympic champion is a very selfish goal and we learned little by little to share that with each other and that made us grow. We stuck together, believed in each other, grew as people and were able to get involved in projects outside of sport." (gqmagazine.fr, 09 Mar 2022; rti.fr, 09 May 2019)</p> <p>OTHER ACTIVITIES After the 2012 Olympic Games in London, he was scouted by a modelling agency, and has since walked for fashion labels and featured in advertisements. He has also worked as sports editor for the non-profit arts and culture publication Cero Magazine. In 2020 he said he hoped to work with underprivileged children in the future. "One of the big things I want to do is start a foundation to help kids fence who aren't from affluent backgrounds. I want to get more into the arts. It's something I've always been passionate about. I'm very interested in acting and being behind the camera." (Instagram profile, 14 Apr 2022; fashionweekdaily.com, 10 Apr 2020; LinkedIn profile, 01 May 2020)</p> <p>LEAVING UNIVERSITY In 2012 he accepted a scholarship to study at St John's University in New York, NY, United States of America. He decided to drop out in 2013 to focus on fencing and his modelling career, as National Collegiate Athletic Association [NCAA] eligibility rules meant he was unable to receive payment for work as an amateur athlete. "Given the time and energy necessary to pursue modelling work, I couldn't afford to do it unpaid. So I swallowed hard and accepted my reality. I wanted to fence, build my modelling career and earn an education. To remain an amateur, I had to choose two out of three. I didn't have a choice. Fencing was my life. Modelling was my livelihood." (latimes.com, 24 Jun 2018; theplayertribune.com, 14 May 2015; redstormsports.com, 11 Dec 2012)</p> <p>NAME ORIGIN His parents chose his given name based on the character Race Bannon from the 'Jonny Quest' cartoon. (sports.yahoo.com, 26 Jul 2012)</p>