

**General Information**

Country:	FRA
Gender:	F
Handedness:	Right-handed
Date of birth:	1983-03-17
License:	17031983000

**Further Personal Information**

Residence	Paris, FRA
Occupation	Athlete, Author, Engineer, Public Speaker
Languages	English, French
Higher education	Engineering - EPF Engineering School: Sceaux, FRA

**Sport Specific Information**

When and where did you begin this sport?	She began fencing at age five at the Sports Union Le Vesinet [USV] club in France. Her first coach, Gerard Rousseau, who passed away in 2009, trained her for more than 20 years.
Why this sport?	"My mother and I would accompany my brother Brice to training at Le Vesinet [USV]. As a small child I liked to touch everything, so I would play with the foils and one day an instructor asked me if I wanted to train too. I chose foil simply because that was all that was offered at the club. At about age eight, I discovered the emotion of winning. All these years later, it's that same feeling that still drives me."
Club / Team	Melun Val de Seine [CMVS]: France
Name of coach	Emeric Clos [national], FRA
Training Regime	She trains at the National Institute of Sport, Expertise and Performance [INSEP] in Paris, France.
Handedness	Right

General Interest	
Hobbies	Sport, politics, cooking, travel, fishing. (Facebook profile, 06 Jan 2021)
Most influential person in career	Her first coach Gerard Rousseau. (escrime-ffe.fr, 14 May 2011)
Injuries	<p>In February 2021 she recovered from a chronic elbow injury that had caused her pain for over 18 months and required surgery following the postponement of the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo. (Instagram profile, 30 Feb 2021)</p> <p>In November 2018 she underwent surgery for a chronic knee problem, which put her out of action for several months. (theagilityeffect.com, 10 Jul 2019)</p> <p>In April 2007 she suffered a serious hip injury that almost ended her career, and resulted in a fundamental change of technique to her fencing. (francetv.fr, 01 Dec 2010; theagilityeffect.com, 10 Jul 2019)</p>
Sporting philosophy / motto	"Victory confirms a step forward. Failure forces you to ask yourself - 'How can I do better? What does this setback have to teach me?' Being dissatisfied pushes you to make sure that it doesn't happen again. It accelerates your progress." (theagilityeffect.com, 10 Jul 2019)
Awards and honours	<p>In 2021 she was selected as the ambassador of the inaugural Masters Games in Vichy, France, by the French National Olympic and Sports Committee. (lamontagne.fr, 07 Feb 2021)</p> <p>In 2017 she was named a Knight of the National Order of Merit in France. (La Republique de Sainte-et-Marne pressreader.com, 26 Jun 2017)</p>
Famous relatives	Her brother Brice has represented France in fencing. He won gold in team foil at the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney and individual gold in foil at the 2004 Games in Athens. (SportsDeskOnline, 24 Jun 2015; escrime-ffe.fr, 14 May 2011)
Ambitions	To win a medal at the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo. (capital.fr, 24 Jun 2020)
Other information	<p><b>ENGINEERING</b> She has worked as an aeronautical and aerospace engineer. From 2007 to 2015 she worked for Airbus Defence and Space on design of the Ariane 6 launch vehicle developed by the European Space Agency, before joining ArianeGroup in 2016. "[I was] a part-time space engineer in the field of launchers and space vehicles research and development. The reason I became an engineer is because I've been fascinated about space since a very young age. My training as an engineer has helped my analytical skills [in fencing]. I feel like a sort of hybrid because I act intuitively as an athlete but at the same time I analyse things as an engineer, and when the two come together it creates an interesting combination on the fencing piste." (LinkedIn profile, 01 Sep 2020; theagilityeffect.com, 10 Jul 2019; sportmag.fr, 16 Feb 2018; crescendo-blog.fr, 15 Jan 2017)</p> <p><b>CHILDREN'S AUTHOR</b> In 2015 she started writing children's stories to cope with the stress of preparing for the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro. In 2017 she released a collection of children's books called, 'Les incroyables rencontres de Jo' [The Amazing Encounters of Jo] to pass on her passion of sport and its values to younger generations. She was inspired by her niece to write the books, whose main character 'Jo' was named after the French word for the Olympic Games [Jeux Olympiques]. "I wanted to give her a sports book, but as I could not find one I decided to write it myself. The stories tell of encounters between Jo and great French sportsmen who, in my opinion, perfectly embody the values of sport. [As of 2021] five volumes have already been published." (sport24.lefigaro.fr, 25 Feb 2020; Le Parisien Week-End, 04 May 2018; sportmag.fr, 16 Feb 2018; leparisien.fr, 02 Mar 2017; boulognebillancourt.com, 26 Jan 2021)</p> <p><b>BALANCING ENGINEERING, WRITING AND FENCING</b> She has said that organisation is the key that has allowed her to pursue fencing and writing on top of her work as an aeronautical and aerospace engineer. "It's never a question of sacrifice for me. The day I feel like I'm making sacrifices is the day I quit one thing [work or fencing] for the other. The word 'sacrifice' does not exist in my vocabulary. However, it is a question of organisation. A lot of thinking goes into how I'm going to organise and prioritise things. That is what allows me to attain a balance between work and fencing. It's also important for me to take time to recover, to take a deep breath and lower the pressure." (FIE Facebook page, 06 Mar 2019)</p> <p><b>INJURY ADJUSTMENT</b> In April 2007 she suffered a serious hip injury that almost ended her career. Doctors gave her two options - stop fencing or drastically adjust her fencing style to reduce pressure on the hip. "I chose the second option so that I could pursue my dream of competing in the Olympics. To preserve my front leg and not find myself unable to walk at age 40, I was forced to adopt small feints rather than large ones. Thankfully, I was eventually able to turn this source of constraint of movement around, so that today I have a fulfilled, liberated and free experience when fencing. The new technique has now become my special move, the one my opponents fear. It's almost Darwinian - what enables you to survive at one point is what ultimately makes you stronger." (francetv.fr, 01 Dec 2010; theagilityeffect.com, 10 Jul 2019)</p> <p><b>OTHER ACTIVITIES</b> She is a member of the Athletes' Commission for the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris, and since 2019 she has held the elected role of vice president of the Athletes' Committee of the French Anti-Doping Agency [AFLD]. She is also a member of the French Equality, Education and Social Cohesion observatory for the Superior Council de l'Audiovisuel [CSA], and an ambassador of Sport and OI</p>