

**General Information**

Country:	USA
Gender:	M
Handedness:	Right-handed
Date of birth:	1986-11-05
License:	05111986003

**Further Personal Information**

Occupation	Athlete, Coach
Languages	English, Spanish

**Sport Specific Information**

When and where did you begin this sport?	He was chosen to attend a fencing academy in Cuba at age 11. "I started fencing when I was 10 years old. I started doing foil, and then I transitioned to epee. I like the fact that you have to be more creative to find a touch because the whole body counts. I could hit your hand, I could hit your foot, I could hit your head, everywhere. When I see an epee match, I get like super, super into it because I'm looking at every angle to score."
Why this sport?	His father encouraged him to try fencing and moved him to a different school so he could pursue the sport. "In the beginning I didn't like fencing. I didn't know much about the sport, so a coach came to my school to recruit people for fencing and I was like, 'Fencing? Nah. I don't think I want to do that. I want to do boxing, volleyball, basketball, or maybe karate - some type of different sport'. And then he [his father] took me from my school and put me into different school without my permission, in a new classroom with new people. And he didn't even tell me I was going to be fencing. And I was like, 'What am I doing here?'"
Club / Team	Peter Westbrook Foundation [USA] / Fencers Club [USA]:
Handedness	Right

**General Interest**

Hobbies	Watching basketball, supporting US basketball team the LA Lakers, cooking. (usafencing.org, 13 Apr 2021)
Memorable sporting achievement	Qualifying for the 2020 Olympic Games. (usafencing.org, 13 Apr 2021; fie.org, 19 Mar 2021)
Most influential person in career	His father, and US fencer Peter Westbrook. (usafencing.org, 13 Apr 2021)
Hero / Idol	US basketball player LeBron James. (usafencing.org, 13 Apr 2021)
Injuries	He sustained a series of injuries, including one to his knee, between 2016 and 2018. (bronx.news12.com, 24 Jul 2021; lbtihaj Muhammad Facebook page, 25 Jun 2021)
Sporting philosophy / motto	"You lose more than you win." (usafencing.org, 13 Apr 2021)
Ambitions	To compete at the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris. (The Peter Westbrook Foundation 2021 Annual Report, 23 Dec 2021)
Other information	<p><b>CUBA TO UNITED STATES OF AMERICA</b> Born in Guantanamo, Cuba, he moved to the United States of America in 2007 and continued fencing with the Peter Westbrook Foundation in New York. He became a US citizen in 2014. "I came to the US in 2007. Obviously, coming to New York was overwhelming for somebody who didn't speak the language at that point. One of my father's friends told me, 'If you want to get ahead in this country, you have to learn the language'. And he told me how to do it: try to learn three words a day. Just three. That's what I did. Every day, I woke up in the morning, and I wrote three new words every single day and I was learning it. I was lucky enough to find the [Peter Westbrook] Foundation. I went on the internet and I started looking for a fencing club. I went there and Peter welcomed me with open hands. Everything I have in fencing I would say is because of Peter. Plus my hard work too." (usafencing.org, 13 Apr 2021, 01 Jan 2016; medeofencing.com, 2014)</p> <p><b>TOUGH TIMES</b> He thought of retiring from competitive sport after missing the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro. Following a series of injuries over the next two years, he decided to take a five-month break from the sport before returning to competition in the 2019/20 season. "[Coach] Peter [Westbrook] told me, 'If you want to quit, don't quit 100%, at least hang in there 50%. And if you feel like it, you can come back'. I took a five-month break. I just focused on my body and tried to heal completely. When the 2019/20 season started, I was ready to go. I remember I went to Cuba, and I started training a little bit. I thought, 'Oh, my knee doesn't hurt anymore'. So when I came back to New York, physically I was 120%. Two months after returning to training, I won the first competition for the [Tokyo 2020] qualifiers. From there my confidence is back and I began working more on my mental because fencing is 80% mental, and 20% physical. Honestly, it works." (bronx.news12.com, 24 Jul 2021; lbtihaj Muhammad Facebook page, 25 Jun 2021)</p>