

General Information

Country:	USA
Gender:	M
Handedness:	Left-handed
Date of birth:	1997-02-03
License:	03021997006

Further Personal Information

Residence	Teaneck, NJ, USA
Occupation	Athlete, Coach, Student
Languages	English
Higher education	Communications - New Jersey Institute of Technology: Newark, NJ, USA

Sport Specific Information

When and where did you begin this sport?	He began fencing at age nine at the Peter Westbrook Foundation in New York, NY, United States of America.
Why this sport?	He followed his sister Kamali into the sport, initially taking up fencing as a casual Saturday morning activity. He started with foil but switched to sabre after watching Kamali training in the discipline. "I started in foil, it was a completely different weapon than sabre. So, I'm in a foil class, and I'm not even paying attention at all. I'm just watching the sabre fencers, I'm like, 'This is the coolest thing ever'. It's aggressive, it's fast paced. For the older kids, they have the 12:30 [sabre] class, so I'm still there and just sitting there watching in admiration. And the coach comes to me, 'Hey do you want to do this?' I just looked at my mum, 'Can I please do it?' She's like, 'Yes you can do it'. I just stuck with it."
Club / Team	Peter Westbrook Foundation: New York, NY, USA
Name of coach	Peter Westbrook [club]; Akhi Spencer-EI [club]; Sara Vicenzen
Handedness	Left

General Interest

Nicknames	KT, Lil (Athlete, 25 Jul 2021)
Hobbies	Photography, trying new restaurants. (Athlete, 25 Jul 2021)
Memorable sporting achievement	Qualifying for the 2020 Olympic Games. (Athlete, 25 Jul 2021)
Most influential person in career	Coaches Peter Westbrook and Akhi Spencer-El, and US fencers Keeth Smart and Daryl Homer. (Athlete, 25 Jul 2021)
Hero / Idol	US fencer Keeth Smart. (Athlete, 25 Jul 2021)
Superstitions / Rituals / Beliefs	He plays the video game 'Candy Crush' between matches. (usafencing.org, 18 May 2021)
Famous relatives	His sister Kamali Thompson has represented the United States of America in fencing, and competed in team sabre at the 2019 World Championships in Budapest, Hungary. (SportsDeskOnline, 26 May 2021; USA Fencing Facebook page, 03 May 2020)
Other information	<p>DEALING WITH DEPRESSION In 2015 he began studying at Penn State University in the United States of America but left at the end of his first year after developing anxiety. He was close to quitting fencing but drew inspiration from US fencer Daryl Homer winning silver at the 2016 Olympic Games, and also received encouragement from coach Peter Westbrook. He has since resumed studying at New Jersey Institute of Technology and participated in mental health symposiums as a speaker. "There was school stress and paying for school stress because I wasn't on a scholarship. There was a point where I developed crazy anxiety and it would keep me up at night. I met with a psychologist and they diagnosed me with severe depression and severe anxiety disorder. At one point I didn't leave my house for a month and I almost quit fencing. [But] that summer I saw Daryl [Homer] medal at the 2016 Olympic Games and that gave me more inspiration to keep fencing. So I was like, 'I can't run away from something that's happening in my life right now and I need to deal with it'. Peter [Westbrook] realised that I was still at home in September, so I told him what was happening and he was really helpful in getting me out of that state. He would call me during the day and tell me I needed to go to practice and I wouldn't want to go, but it made me feel better. I'd go to therapy before practice and it would be a tough session, so Wednesday nights would turn into me fencing and talking and it became another form of therapy." (event.newschool.edu, 28 Jan 2022; USA TODAY Sports YouTube channel, 31 Jul 2021; njitvector.com, 25 Aug 2021; usafencing.org, 18 May 2021)</p> <p>SIBLING SUPPORT His sister Kamali has also competed for the US national fencing team. "It's like having your best friend there who you can talk to about anything and I don't have to think about anything. We just show up and it's strictly supporting. Any time we got frustrated at tournaments we had each other to talk to. I learned a lot from Kamali because, when she didn't make the 2016 [Olympic Games] team, she had a lot of insights to talk to me about. The first year of being on the World Cup circuit is the hardest and, to be honest, you spend a lot of time losing. The jump from juniors to seniors is hard. But Kamali really helped me get my mind right for fencing seniors. I'm the younger brother so I do younger-brother annoying things. But fencing has put us in a place where we have to see each other as adults. Sometimes at tournaments I will coach her. Sometimes she has coached me. It really helps." (nypost.com, 17 Jul 2021; usafencing.org, 18 May 2021)</p>