

**General Information**

Country:	EST
Gender:	F
Height:	170
Weight:	50
Handedness:	Left-handed
Date of birth:	1980-07-12
Education:	student
Profession:	student
License:	12071980003

**Further Personal Information**

Family	Daughter Maria
Occupation	Athlete, Coach
Languages	English, Estonian, Russian
Higher education	Chemistry - Tallinn University of Technology: Estonia

**Sport Specific Information**

When and where did you begin this sport?	She began competing in fencing in 1996.
Club / Team	Vehklemisklubi IREM: Tallinn, EST
Name of coach	Kaido Kaaberma [national], EST
Handedness	Left

### General Interest

Nicknames	Ira (ohtuleht.ee, 18 Jun 2012)
Memorable sporting achievement	Winning gold in team epee at the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo. (sport.delfi.ee, 23 Sep 2023)
Injuries	A wrist injury meant she missed the 2017 World Cup event in Tallinn, Estonia. (sport.delfi.ee, 04 Oct 2017)
Awards and honours	<p>In 2022 she received the Order of the White Star 2nd class in recognition of her services to the Estonian state following her gold medal in team epee at the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo. (sport.delfi.ee, 21 Feb 2022)</p> <p>In 2021 she was named Alumni of the Year by the Tallinn University of Technology. (taltech.ee, 17 Sep 2021)</p> <p>She and her teammates Julia Beljajeva, Erika Kirpu, and Katrina Lehis received the Best Female Multiple Athlete Event of Tokyo 2020 prize at the 2021 ANOC [Association of National Olympic Committees] Awards in Crete, Greece. (fie.org, 25 Oct 2021; anocolympic.org, 24 Oct 2021)</p> <p>In 2019 she was presented with the Order of the White Star [Third Class] in Estonia. (kesknadal.ee, 03 Dec 2019; sport.err.ee, 29 Jan 2019)</p> <p>She was part of the 2017 Team of the Year in Estonia. (laanlane.ee, 27 Dec 2017)</p> <p>She was named the 2007 Best Female Athlete in Estonia. (epl.ee, 27 Jun 2013)</p>
Milestones	Along with Julia Beljajeva, Erika Kirpu, and Katrina Lehis, she was part of the women's epee team that won Estonia's first gold medal in fencing at the Olympic Games. They beat the Republic of Korea in the final at the 2020 Games in Tokyo. (SportsDeskOnline, 06 Apr 2022; estonianworld.com, 27 Jul 2021)
Ambitions	To compete at the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris. (sport.postimees.ee, 30 Dec 2021)
Other information	<p><b>CLUB OWNER</b>  She runs the Vehklemisklubi IREM club in Tallinn, Estonia, where she coaches young fencers. "I have a fencing club of my own name. There are about 40 children training there [speaking in 2019] and it seems that fencing is becoming more popular. This is definitely also related to the fact that Estonia's top fencers have good results. Young people see that their coaches, who are competing on TV and winning medals, are real people next to them and that is a strong incentive for them." (Vehklemisklubi IREM Facebook page, 26 Oct 2020; kesknadal.ee, 03 Dec 2019)</p> <p><b>OTHER ACTIVITIES</b>  She has held a position on the city council in Tallinn, Estonia, and has also stood for election as a member of parliament. "I do not set high goals in politics. It is difficult to achieve something big in politics while being active in top sport, in addition to running a fencing club and coaching." (kesknadal.ee, 03 Dec 2019; valimised.err.ee, 15 Jan 2015; delfi.ee, 01 Nov 2013)</p> <p><b>OLYMPIC PURSUIT</b>  She started fencing in 1996 and failed to qualify to compete at the Olympic Games in 2000, 2004, 2008, and 2012. She finally represented Estonia at the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, before winning gold in team epee at the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo. "I didn't get to the Olympics for a long time, either individually or with the team. I tried four times in a row. The last two Olympics were achieved. Last time [in 2016] we got fourth place. But this year we won. The Olympics is the best moment in an athlete's life. Of course, when the anthem [is played and] the flag flies it's good. This is the moment in my life that every athlete dreams of." (pealinn.ee, 02 Aug 2021)</p>