



General Information

Country:	RUS
Gender:	F
Handedness:	Right-handed
Date of birth:	1985-06-08
License:	08061985003

Further Personal Information

Family	Son Oleg, daughter Zoya
Residence	Moscow, RUS
Occupation	Armed Forces Athlete
Languages	English, Russian

Sport Specific Information

When and where did you begin this sport?	She began fencing at age 14 in Almaty, Kazakhstan.
Why this sport?	She played the piano when she was younger, but she came to dislike it. Her older brother was already involved in fencing and she decided to follow him into the sport. "When I was 14, my older brother Grigoriy encouraged me to do fencing, for which I am very grateful. It was rather late [to start training in] our sport. It took me two years to try and understand."
Club / Team	Central Sports Army Club [RUS] / MGFSO [RUS]:
Name of coach	Dmitry Glotov [national, personal], RUS
Handedness	Right

General Interest	
Nicknames	Sonya (olympics.com, 21 Dec 2021)
Hero / Idol	Russian fencer Stanislav Pozdnyakov. (sovsport.ru, 08 Mar 2017)
Injuries	She missed the 2015 Russian Championships due to an elbow injury. (team-russia2016.ru, 26 May 2015)
Sporting philosophy / motto	"Everything is possible in life. Even the impossible." (woman.ru, 26 Nov 2020)
Awards and honours	<p>In recognition of her achievements at the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo, she received the Order of Friendship from the president of the Russian Federation. (kremlin.ru, 11 Aug 2021)</p> <p>She and volleyball player Maksim Mikhaylov were selected to be flag bearers for the ROC team at the opening ceremony of the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo. (tass.com, 30 Jun 2021)</p> <p>She received the Order of Honour from the president of the Russian Federation in recognition of the gold medal she won at the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro. (kremlin.ru, 25 Aug 2016)</p> <p>She was named the 2015 Female Athlete of the Year in the Russian Federation. (interfax.ru, 10 Dec 2015)</p> <p>In recognition of her achievements at the 2012 Olympic Games in London, she was decorated with the Order of Merits to the Fatherland [first class] by the president of the Russian Federation. (kremlin.ru, 13 Aug 2012)</p> <p>She has received the title of Honoured Master of Sport in the Russian Federation. (rusfencing.ru, 23 Jan 2021)</p>
Milestones	She became the first athlete to be beaten in three Olympic finals in one specific fencing event [excluding team events] and the first fencer to claim three Olympic medals in the women's individual sabre when she won silver at the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo. (SportsDeskOnline, 26 Jul 2021)
Ambitions	To win a gold medal at the 2024 Olympic Games in Paris. (kp.ru, 05 Nov 2021)
Other information	<p>OLYMPIC MOTIVATION After the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo she said that competing at the Olympics is her main source of motivation to continue her sports career. "I can't believe that I took part in four Olympic Games and I don't exclude participation in the fifth edition. For me, each Olympics was special and I had a different mood at each. In my case, it would be wrong to speak exclusively about participation in the Games. I have to motivate people and the younger generation, to show that we are a strong country, that we are going for gold and we will take it. When the individual competitions in Tokyo ended, and I again became the silver medallist, I didn't even have time to get upset. Just then, a call came from the family. My relatives told me, 'Congratulations on the silver! Well, let's get ready for Paris?' And this phrase inspired me a lot. Even before the team competition, I realised that I did not plan to end my career: not today, not tomorrow, not in a week. I have an incentive, I have inspiration from my good performance in Tokyo, I have a desire to continue my path in sports, to go through the difficulties in the selection for Paris." (olympics.com, 21 Dec 2021)</p> <p>FAMILY NAME Her family name Velikaia means 'great' in Russian. "I have a surname that obliges a lot. One wise man told me, 'Your family name and modesty are incompatible things!' My surname never embarrassed me, in my youth I didn't pay attention to it. Later, when I began to show results and win gold medals, I had to feel responsible for my last name. I have already got used to repeating and explaining that this is my real name. Now I like that my last name is associated with me." (olympics.com, 21 Dec 2021)</p> <p>MOVIE The story of her rivalry with another Russian fencer, Yana Egorian, who defeated her in the final of the women's individual sabre at the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro, served as a model for the Russian sports drama film 'On the Edge' that was released in 2020. "When I watched the film, emotions were at the limit. There was a feeling that I was re-experiencing all those events, memories came to life not only about the Olympics in Rio, I also remembered my silver [at the 2012 Olympic Games] in London, and even Beijing in 2008, where I took fourth place, and in general all my sports ups and downs for the whole sports career." (tass.ru, 26 Nov 2020)</p> <p>POST-OLYMPIC PAUSE She decided to take a break from fencing following the 2012 Olympic Games in London. She gave birth to her son and missed major international competitions in 2013. She did not compete for almost a year before returning at the 2014 World Cup event in Antalya, Turkey. She also missed the 2016/17 season after competing at the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro. (sovsport.ru, 08 Mar 2017; rusfencing.ru, 16 Mar 2014)</p> <p>OTHER ROLES She has served as head of the athletes' commission of the Russian Olympic Committee. (olympic.ru, 20 Dec 2021)</p> <p>FURTHER EDUCATION She received a master's degree and has pursued PhD studies at the Higher School of Cultural Policy and Administration at Moscow State University in the Russian Federation. (msu.ru, 27 Jul 2021)</p>