

SHOOTING



DANIELLE FONG

BORN:

April 15, 1990
in New York, NY

CURRENT RESIDENCE:

New York, NY

ETHNICITY:

Hapa Chinese

EVENT:

50m rifle three position

DID YOU KNOW?

Sandra always listens to the same playlist before she shoots. "My iPod and I are best friends," she said.



YUMAN FONG

SANDRA FONG

Sandra Fong, who goes by the nickname "Sandy," began the sport of shooting at the age of 12. Now 18, the first-time Olympian will be heading to Beijing in the summer and Princeton University as a freshman in the fall. For the Fongs, shooting is a family sport. Her older sister Abigail, who also attends Princeton, competed alongside Sandra in the Olympic trials but missed her chance for Beijing. Her younger sister Danielle, who has cerebral palsy, will be competing in shooting at the Paralympics in Beijing in September. Her dad, a Hong Kong native, also shoots, while their mom helps them prepare for competitions. Sandra, who was her high school's girls varsity swim captain, swam competitively as a child but chose to focus solely on shooting outside of school. However, she has used swimming to help her train for shooting.

INTERVIEW BY STEFFI LAU

How did you get involved in shooting?

My dad did it in high school, and six years ago he picked up a rifle again, after 20-something odd years. He got into shooting and loved the community. He brought us out to the range, and it turned into a family sport.

What is the shooting community like?

It's the kindest, most generous sports community I've been involved in, and I've been involved in sports since I was seven. It's really like a family; it fosters people doing well. The biggest thing to showcase that was when I was going to championships, and people forgot to tell me that I was competing in one event, so I didn't have half my equipment. But everyone was kind enough to lend me their equipment, and I ended up competing and winning for my age group with other people's equipment.

What was it like competing with your sister Abigail to make it to the Olympics?

The weeks leading up to the match were stressful for the two of us, since we were both

trying to get into that mental preparation. We really can't think of each other as family on the range. As much as I love Abby, and I know she loves me, on the range, we're just competitors. It was hard. She was happy for me but was obviously very disappointed she didn't make the team.

Do you get asked about sibling rivalry often?

It's not so much rivalry, but a way to push each other to get better each time. We're both training partners, so we're always striving to shoot better.

Your sister Danielle is going to Beijing for the Paralympics in September. What's it like to be both going?

I'm so proud of her because she's worked so hard to get where she is. When she was born, they told her she wouldn't be able to walk, and she does; that she wouldn't be able to talk, and she does; that she wouldn't be able to go to a normal school, and she does. She's a three-season athlete and captain of a club team. She works hard to attain her goal through discipline.

Can you speak Chinese?

Only a little bit of Cantonese. It's enough to talk a little bit with my grandparents and order lots of dim sum.

What are the reactions you get when people find out you're in shooting?

It's actually surprising the positive feedback I get. More often they're impressed and ask questions instead of dismissing it.

You're going off to Princeton in the fall.

I'm very excited to start college. I'll be going to Princeton alongside Abby. So we'll be pushing each other academically as well.

Did the fact that she attends Princeton play into your decision to go there?

I was looking for strong academic colleges with a shooting team. I was choosing between MIT and Princeton; though MIT had a NCAA team, Princeton only has a club team. But in

the end, Princeton ended up offering more for me in terms of extracurriculars, and I knew that with Abby, I would have a world-class training partner even in a club team.

What's the difference between a NCAA team and a club team?

A NCAA team competes in the NCAA league and under the NCAA rules. Those tend to be the higher caliber teams with more funding. However, Princeton is a club team, which means it competes within a regional league

(the Mid-Atlantic Conference) rather than a national one and is mostly run by student interest. However, they are both competitive teams; it just depends upon the shooters who make up the team.

What will you be majoring in?

I will be doing pre-med, which isn't a major. So I'm undecided, but I'm looking somewhere in business or media.

Would you say shooting is a dangerous sport?

It's far less dangerous than any other sport. There are lots of precautions. The rifle is always pointed to a paper target. People always worry about shooting, but I tell them I'd be more worried about wrestling or gymnastics, where you could break bones.

Career Highlights

2008

U.S. Olympic team trials for shooting (Smallbore), second place in women's 3-Position Rifle, qualifying for a spot on the 2008 U.S. Olympic Team

Smallbore Champion, Junior Olympic Rifle Championships

2007

Junior Silver Medalist in smallbore 3P at the USAS National Championships

2006

World Championships (Zagreb) competed in smallbore 3P, prone, and air rifle

Junior Silver Medalist in air rifle at the USAS National Championships

National J3 record holder for 50 m prone and 3P air rifle

SHOOTING



» THE SPORT OF SHOOTING WAS INCLUDED AS AN EVENT DURING THE 1896 ATHENS GAMES. THE FORMAT OF COMPETITION CONSTANTLY CHANGES TO THE TUNE OF SOCIAL RULES AND TECHNOLOGY. THE OLYMPIC COMMITTEE ABANDONED HUMAN- AND ANIMAL-SHAPED TARGETS IN FAVOR OF A CIRCULAR TARGET. THE COMMITTEE HAS ALSO ADDED AND TAKEN AWAY DISCIPLINES. AT THE 2004 ATHENS GAMES, THERE WERE 3 DISCIPLINES: RIFLE, PISTOL, AND SHOTGUN.