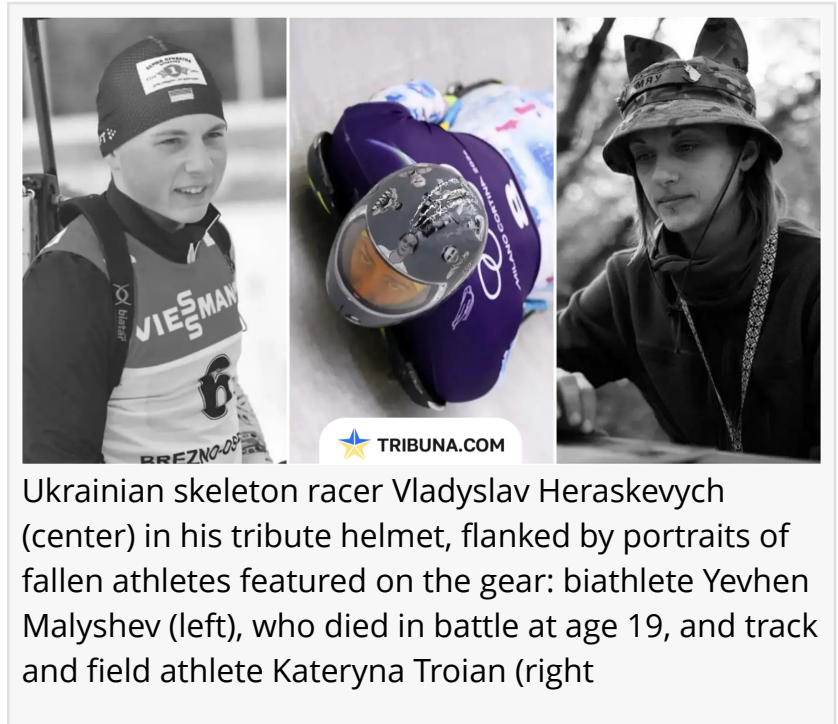


Revealed: The Stories of Fallen Athletes Depicted on Vladyslav Heraskevych's Banned Olympic Helmet

Full list released of 20+ fallen Ukrainian athletes from Vladyslav Heraskevych's banned Olympic helmet, documenting lives cut short by the invasion.

KYIV, UKRAINE, February 10, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Following the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) decision to ban Ukrainian skeleton racer Vladyslav Heraskevych's tribute helmet, the full list of more than 20 individuals depicted on the gear was [released](#) by [Tribuna.com's](#) journalist Stanislav Oroshevych on February 9. The helmet, which Heraskevych used during training runs at the Winter Olympics in Italy, serves as a "message to the world," featuring portraits of Ukrainian athletes, coaches, and children killed during the Russian invasion.



Ukrainian skeleton racer Vladyslav Heraskevych (center) in his tribute helmet, flanked by portraits of fallen athletes featured on the gear: biathlete Yevhen Malyshev (left), who died in battle at age 19, and track and field athlete Kateryna Troian (right)

The IOC has cited regulations against political messages for the ban, but Heraskevych maintains that the helmet is a tribute to the "Olympic family" and friends lost to the war. "These were people closely connected to sports all their lives, who cheered for us, and who were our friends," Heraskevych stated.

“

Rule 50 — which concerns political propaganda, discrimination, or racial propaganda — simply does not apply to this helmet”
Vladyslav Heraskevych

Among the twenty-plus portraits are international medalists such as Youth Olympic silver medalist boxer Maksym Halinichev, figure skater Dmytro Sharpar, who competed in the 2016 Youth Olympics, and world champion strongman Pavlo Ishchenko.

The tribute also honors the next generation of talent, including Karyna Diachenko, an 11-year-

old gymnast killed by an aerial bomb in Mariupol, and Viktoriia Ivashko, a 9-year-old judoka killed during shelling in Kyiv. Additionally, the helmet features dedicated coaches and mentors like Taras Shpuk, who led the Invictus Games veteran team, and Mykyta Kozubenko, a diving coach and Master of Sports.

The Full List of Tributes

Dmytro Sharpar, figure skater

Former Ukrainian figure skater Dmytro Sharpar died near Bakhmut on January 23, 2023. The Kharkiv native was 25 years old. He competed in pairs with Anastasiia Pobizhenko. He won silver at the Ukrainian Championship and reached the top 10 at the 2016 Youth Olympics in Norway. After his career, he was a performer in the "Grand" circus show on ice.

Pavlo Ishchenko, strongman

Pavlo was a four-time champion of Ukraine in strongman combined events, and before that – a world and European champion, and multiple-time champion of Ukraine in powerlifting. He died while performing a combat mission in October 2025.

Maksym Halinichev, boxer

Maksym Halinichev died in the war against Russia. This happened on March 10, 2023, in the Luhansk region. In May 2022, he declined to participate in the European Championship and volunteered for the airborne assault troops. Despite two wounds, he continued to fight. Halinichev won gold at the 2017 European Youth Championship, was a silver medalist at the 2018 Youth Olympic Games, and a silver medalist at the 2021 European U-22 Championship.

Yevhen Malyshev, biathlete

The 19-year-old former biathlete died in battle for Kharkiv on March 1, 2022. Two years ago, he was part of the national junior team. During the Russian invasion, he was serving under contract. He participated in the Third Winter Youth Olympic Games in Lausanne in 2020.

Andrii Kutsenko, cyclist

Multiple-time champion of Ukraine in cycling. The 34-year-old cyclist was an International Class Master of Sports of Ukraine, a winner and medalist of international competitions, and a participant in European and World Championships. Andrii lived in Italy with his family, but after the start of the full-scale invasion, he returned to Ukraine and volunteered for the Armed Forces of Ukraine. He took his last fight as part of the 47th Separate Mechanized Brigade "Magura" of the Armed Forces of Ukraine on July 3, 2024.

Oleksii Lohinov, hockey player

Former goalkeeper of Bila Tserkva's "Bilyi Bars," Oleksii Lohinov, died at age 23 in the Luhansk region on November 8, 2023. After the start of the full-scale war, Oleksii volunteered for the Armed Forces of Ukraine. In hockey, he began playing at the "Sokil" school, with which he became a bronze medalist of the Ukraine U-17 Championship in 2015. For the next two years,

Lohinov was in the "Kryzhynka" system, and in 2017, he debuted in the adult Ukrainian championship for the Kyiv-based "Kryzhani Vovky." After playing one match for the team, Oleksii moved to "Bilyi Bars," with whom he became the 2018 Ukrainian youth champion (U-20) and, after playing two matches in the adult national championship, became a bronze medalist of the Ukrainian Championship.

Karyna Bakhur, kickboxing

Ukrainian kickboxing champion Karyna Bakhur died during a Russian attack on the night of November 18, 2025. This occurred in Berestyn, Kharkiv region. The 17-year-old Ukrainian was running to a basement in a building where there was a shelter, but she suffered shrapnel wounds. Karyna was a champion of Ukraine and Europe in kickboxing and Cossack duel, a medalist at the World Championship; she would have turned 18 on December 5, 2025.

Mykyta Kozubenko, diving

Mykyta Kozubenko died at age 31 during combat operations while serving in the National Guard of Ukraine in June 2025. Kozubenko was a Master of Sports of Ukraine in diving and a coach in this sport. Originally from Mykolaiv, Mykyta entered the sport at a young age and remained in it for years.

Roman Polishchuk, athletics

Polishchuk was a high jumper. He joined the Armed Forces of Ukraine from the first days of the full-scale invasion by the Russian Federation. The athlete served in the 206th battalion of the 241st brigade. He died in March 2023.

Andrii Yaremenko, Greco-Roman wrestling

Yaremenko died on December 4, 2025, while performing a combat mission. He was just nine days short of his 26th birthday. Andrii was mobilized in 2025 and served as an unmanned systems operator within the 115th Separate Brigade of the Territorial Defense Forces in the Zaporizhzhia direction. Yaremenko was a multiple-time medalist of Ukrainian championships and cups, represented the Zhytomyr region in national and international competitions, was part of the Ukrainian national team, and took 10th place at the Cadet World Championship.

Taras Shpuk, coach of the Invictus Games team

Shpuk was born and raised in Ivano-Frankivsk. His life was inextricably linked with sports: he participated in trail running, running, cycling, and hiking. He was a participant in the Revolution of Dignity. In 2014, he joined the army, defending Ukraine as part of one of the volunteer battalions. Shpuk worked at the "Come Back Alive" foundation since 2019 and was involved in developing veteran sports as a coach. In November 2023, Taras Shpuk left the foundation for military intelligence. He died while performing a mission in a special-purpose group in September 2025.

Fedir Yepifanov, fencing

Born on January 31, 2004. He was a champion and medalist of national competitions in foil

fencing, a participant in international tournaments, notably ranking among the top 16 strongest fencers at the 2021 Cadet World Championship in Cairo, and held the title of Master of Sports of Ukraine. He studied at the Ivan Piddubnyi Olympic Professional College. From the first days of the full-scale invasion, the young man decided to defend Ukraine, even though he was only 18 at the time. He died on December 11, 2023, in the Zaporizhzhia region.

Kateryna Troian, athletics

Kateryna "Meow" Troian died on June 5, 2025, in the Pokrovsk direction at the age of 32. A former professional athlete, programmer, and journalist, she worked for an international IT company, but after the war began, she chose the path of a defender. In the spring of 2024, she joined the 82nd Separate Airborne Assault Brigade. Her call sign "Meow" came from a panama hat with cat ears. During a year and a half of service, she completed over a thousand combat sorties, operated drones, and taught technology to her comrades. The vibrant girl with blue hair and a "Happiness is a choice" tattoo became a symbol of resilience—her portrait was included in an international photo exhibition in London. Having received a fatal wound during a combat mission, Kateryna died the next day at the Mechnikov Hospital.

Volodymyr Androshchuk, athletics

On January 25, 2023, news broke of the death of athlete Volodymyr Androshchuk, who defended Ukraine in the Bakhmut direction. The athlete turned 22 on January 10. Androshchuk competed for the national team on the international stage. In 2018, he participated in the European U-18 Athletics Championship in the decathlon. Two years later, at the European U-20 Championship, he took sixth place in the modern pentathlon. In domestic competitions, the athlete repeatedly stood on the podium. Specifically, in 2019, he won gold at the Ukrainian U-20 Championship in the decathlon.

Oleksii Khabarov, shooting

In August 2025, Oleksii Khabarov—an International Class Master of Sports in shooting, multiple-time champion of Ukraine, and member of the national team—died in the Donetsk region. A student of ДЮСШ No. 1 from Horishni Plavni, in 2017 he set a national record in 10-meter air rifle shooting (248.5 points in the final). He won medals at Ukrainian championships, cups, and international tournaments. He brought back his last "silver" in November 2024 from an international tournament in Romania. Oleksii founded the "Phoenix" sports shooting club in his hometown, where he raised a new generation of shooters. His students became medalists in national competitions. In August 2023, he went to defend Ukraine, joining the ranks of the Defense Forces.

Dariia Kurdel, dance

In 2022, 20-year-old Dariia Kurdel, who was a multiple-time winner of international sports dance competitions, died in Kryvyi Rih. On the morning of July 9, Russian troops shelled the Inhulets microdistrict. A 41-year-old woman died on the spot, and the wounded father and daughter Kurdel were hospitalized. The girl could not be saved. At the moment of the shelling, Dariia and her father were training on a sports ground.

Ivan Kononenko, strongman and actor

Born in Kyiv on July 26, 1983, Ivan qualified as a veterinarian and conducted scientific research in veterinary surgery. Simultaneously, he was part of Vasyl Virastyuk's strongman team, becoming a competition medalist, including the Ukraine Open 2006 Olimp Strongman. He also starred in popular Ukrainian series: "Servant of the People," "Love in Chains" (Kriposna), "Kyiv Day and Night," "Hell's Banner" (Pekelna Khoruhva), and others. On February 24, 2022, Ivan joined the Territorial Defense of the Holiivskyi district. In November, he was severely wounded, but developed his own rehabilitation system and fully recovered despite doctors' predictions. He could have stayed home but returned to the front as a senior lieutenant leading a rifle platoon. He died near the village of Nizhny Klin in the Kursk region. He is survived by two sons – 15-year-old Arkhyn and 5-year-old Nikita. He was considered missing since February 2025; his death was confirmed at the end of the year.

Alina Perehudova, weightlifting

The 14-year-old weightlifter died from shelling in Mariupol on March 29, 2022. The girl stepped out of her house with her mother when an explosion occurred – they were covered by debris. Her brother, who ran out after them, was shot by a Russian sniper. Alina was among the candidate athletes for the national team of Ukraine and was preparing to participate in the European Championship.

Karyna Diachenko, rhythmic gymnastics

11-year-old Ukrainian gymnast Kateryna Diachenko died in Mariupol. The girl was in a building hit by an enemy shell. Her body was found under the rubble of the house. On the night of March 10, 2022, a Russian aerial bomb fell on the building where the 11-year-old gymnast lived. The athlete and her father died instantly. Her mother and brother were taken to a hospital, which was also later destroyed by an airstrike. The entire family perished.

Viktoriiia Ivashko, judo

Viktoriiia Ivashko was a nine-year-old girl who died along with her mother as a result of Russian shelling on June 1, 2023, in the Desnianskyi district of Kyiv. She was a judoka at the "Judo Master" sports club. Just a few days before the shelling, she had been on the tatami, taking her first steps in the sport.

Mariia Lebid, sports dance

The 15-year-old girl died on January 14, 2023, after a Russian terrorist strike on a high-rise building in Dnipro. Mariia was a ninth-grade student at local school No. 66 and practiced ballroom dancing. She was the president of her school's student council.

Nazar Zui, boxing and football

The boy was born in Makiivka, Donetsk region. There he took his first steps in sports – practicing boxing. Later, the family moved to Mariupol, where Nazar became interested in football and played for one of the local teams. On March 11, 2022, around 6 a.m., occupiers dropped a bomb

from a plane on the high-rise building where the family was. Mother Iryna, father Serhii, and their son Nazar died.

Speaking after the IOC press conference, Vladyslav Heraskevych addressed the decision and the broader context of the conflict: "We are all aware of the 'war fatigue' currently being discussed. It is crucial to understand that in the global media, this topic eventually fades into the background, and people in Ukraine sometimes feel they are being forgotten. That is why it is vital to remind the world of what is happening in Ukraine right now. I sincerely believe we have not broken any rules. Rule 50 — which concerns political propaganda, discrimination, or racial propaganda — simply does not apply to this helmet. As you can see, all these athletes were killed, but their voices are now so loud that they are truly being heard."

The ban on the helmet has sparked a global debate on the boundaries of political expression in sports. By releasing these names, the Ukrainian sporting community aims to ensure that these individuals are remembered not just as "images on a helmet," but as champions, colleagues, and children whose lives and sporting dreams were cut short. Vladyslav Heraskevych continues to advocate for the recognition of these losses within the international Olympic movement.

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