

Skaters glide in fun, frustration

By ARLENE VANDERLEUN

You might think that top-rated figure skaters live a glamorous existence of exotic foods, glittery costumes and endless rounds of applause.

There certainly was applause recently when Carol Fox, 22, of Westland, and her partner, Rich Dalley, 21, of Lathrup Village, placed 11th in world championship competition in Vienna in March.

But while Rich (Beanie to his friends) enjoyed sampling treats such as Viennese torte cake, Carol couldn't wait to get home so she could sink her teeth into a taco or peanut butter sandwich.

Carol, a graduate of John Glenn High School, and Beanie, a graduate of Southfield-Lathrup High and former Livonia resident, competed with each other as roller skaters, before teaming up on the ice six years ago. The two currently are ranked second among non-professional figure skating teams in the country.

As Carol and Beanie prepare to compete for the 1980 U.S. Olympic figure skating team next February, they are embarking on a round of ice skating show appearances, starting with Lansing and River Rouge this weekend. Later shows will take them around the country.

These shows provide exposure. They also are a chance for the team to earn \$100-250 toward career expenses, which can mean as much as \$30,000 a year in ice fees, coaching expenses, dancing lessons and travel costs. Carol and Beanie don't have a sponsor, so they must find ways of earning extra money.

Money earned at these shows isn't paid directly to the skaters, but goes to the U.S. Figure Skating Association and applied against Carol's and Beanie's expenses.

The expenses snowball, Carol said.

"What was good before doesn't seem to be enough for the future."

Regrettably, Carol and Beanie, who practice at the Multipurpose Arena in Westland, had to pass up appearing in the '79 Ice Revue to be held in the arena April 6-8. Skaters appearing in that show, which is on a tight budget, are unpaid.

The past year has seen the skating team win a Midwest competition and a national sports festival in Colorado Springs, Colo. They also placed fourth in a competition in Holland and suffered a "heartcrushing disappointment" when they came in second in a national championship, said Carol.

Traveling to non-competitive ice shows is fun, because Carol and Beanie can glide around the ice in graceful dance numbers, unrestricted by rigid guidelines of competition.

Otherwise, Beanie said, traveling means "eating, skating and existing."

The trip to Vienna last month was a little more special than usual because the skaters, accompanied by Carol's mother and sister, stayed at a hotel located next to a palace.

Though they visited the opera and other points of interest, "it still wasn't a vacation by any means," said Beanie.

Dominating their thoughts are the competition and the reality of practicing three times a day for one hour.

Sightseeing is sandwiched in whenever possible.

"YOU'RE COOPED UP with the same group of people all the time," said Beanie. "After a while (the places) run together."

"You don't get the flavor of the country," added Carol. "Everything is planned out."

Carol said skaters are well-fed during competition, mostly somewhat bland food to appeal to a wide variety of international taste buds.

A self-described "picky eater," Carol packs canned food, soups and peanut butter to eat while traveling abroad.

"I don't like veal or seafood," said Carol. "In Holland, the beef was so tough you could hardly cut it."

"When I get home I usually head for the nearest taco stand," she added.

In the five years that Carol and Beanie have been ice skating, they've

moved quickly up the ranks. Now they believe they've "hit a plateau."

Carol admits to feeling like an "underdog" sometimes because the pair doesn't have a sponsor bankrolling their push for the Olympics. She also feels that judges look down on her and Beanie because they're former roller-skaters.

"You need a lot more going for you than your skating," Carol said. "It's discouraging."

The 10 months leading to the Winter Olympics will be a period of perfecting and polishing their techniques in lifting, spinning, footwork and dance steps on ice. It may mean training with special choreographers to improve their skills.

The months ahead most certainly will mean a continuation of a "minimal" social life.

"We're going to give it our all for 10 months," said Carol. "It's not so terrible when you think of it that way."

Aydelotte travels

Bill Aydelotte of Farmington is among five Eastern Michigan University students who have received scholar-

ships to study in West Germany in May and June.

Westland figure skater Carol Fox (left) and her partner, Rich Dalley of Lathrup Village, have their sights set firmly on a spot on the 1980 U.S. Olympics team at Lake Placid, N.Y.

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