

Skaters' hopes are gliding on Oregon contest trail

By ARLENE VANDERLEUN
 When Westland's Carol Fox began ice skating five years ago, she never dreamed it would lead her to the U.S. National figure skating championship and a crack at the 1980 Winter Olympics.
 Ms. Fox, 21, and her partner Rich Dalley, 20, of Lathrup Village, will fly to Portland, Ore. Feb. 5 for the U.S. National championship competition.
 The two are ranked third among non-professional figure skating teams in the country.
 "If all goes well, it is realistic to hope to be on the U.S. Olympic Team," said Ms. Fox.
 The long hours of practicing at Westland's Multipurpose Arena have honed their style. They repeatedly analyze their technique and are perplexed by their most severe critics.

When the two step onto the ice in Portland, they'll forget the strained, overworked muscles, pulled tendons, cuts and bruises, plaster's warts and bone spurs.
 Judges will evaluate their footwork, style and originality, as the pair go through waltz, tango and march steps. They will demonstrate lifts, spins and several original steps.
 Points may be won or lost on appearance. "Rich and Carol will be judged on their weight and body proportions, and how well their waist and legs match," explained coach Carol Hess. Ms. Hess, 28, of Farmington Hills, has been training the two since they teamed up five years ago.
 "They have developed quickly," said Ms. Hess, noting that Ms. Fox and Dalley were ranked fifth nationally in

their first year of competition.
 "It's very satisfying to see them progress. Also coaching keeps me in skating," Ms. Hess said. Ms. Hess was the fifth-ranked figure-skater in America at age 16.
 Ms. Hess smiled as Nancy Berghoff, 16, skated past. Miss Berghoff, a junior at West Bloomfield High School, said she is excitedly preparing for competition in the U.S. National in Portland.
 "She is just starting," commented Ms. Hess. "She has a bright future."
 How does one become involved in a pastime that seems to crowd out all other activities?
 "It starts out as something you like to do, and channels open up," said Ms. Fox.
 "It usually isn't planned," added Ms. Hess. "You become swept up."
 Ms. Fox and Dalley competed against each other as roller skaters before teaming up on the ice.
 Fortunately, they get along well.
 "It's hard to stay together as a team," said Ms. Hess. "I know of one Russian skating team who hate each other." "We know each other, and

need each other to get where we're going," said Ms. Fox.
 The team has a carefully mapped plan that includes competitions in North America and Europe where they must be able to retain their high standing.
 "If all goes well, we may make the U.S. Olympic Team and compete at Lake Placid in 1980," said Ms. Fox.
 Following that, they could join an ice show for about three years. "No more than three years," said Dalley.
 "It's too exhausting."
 Then, life would settle down. Dalley wants to manage an ice rink, while Ms. Fox wants to teach and coach ice skating.
 In the meantime, they are paying a high price for the life they have chosen.
 The costs are enormous. A dance team could spend as much as \$30,000 a year in ice fees, coaching expenses, dancing lessons and travel costs, said Dalley.
 Ms. Fox, a graduate of John Glenn High School, recently dropped classes at Wayne State University, where she is enrolled as a dance major.

"It was getting harder in terms of training and expenses," said Ms. Fox.
 "Everything must be geared to skating," explained Ms. Hess. "If they take any time off, they may backslide."
 Ms. Fox describes her social life as "minimal."
 She is currently working as a waitress at a Westland Denny's restaurant.
 "I eat a lot of hamburgers," she said with a smile.
 Dalley has had to cut back on busi-

ness classes at Oakland Community College. Dalley, a graduate of Southfield-Lathrup High School, attended Stevenson High School before his family moved from Livonia to Lathrup Village a few years ago.
 "Pressure never really goes away. People expect a lot of us," said Dalley. "We must be up mentally and psychologically."
 "I have always wanted to coach a champion team," said Ms. Hess. "We're all building together."



Carol Fox and Rich Dalley will demonstrate their skill and artistry as figure skaters at the U.S. National Skating Competition in Portland, Ore., later this week. The pair is currently ranked third in the nation. (Staff photo by Art Emanuel)

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