

Danielle Hartsell Ocelots from page D4 to quit skating

BY BRAD EMONS
STAFF WRITER
bemons@oc.homecomm.net

One half of the famous Westland brother-sister pairs team is retiring her blades.

Danielle Hartsell, 21, is leaving the world of competitive skating, while brother Steve, 24, plans to continue with a new partner, according to their mother.

"Danielle is quitting the business," Georgia Hartsell said. "She's moving to Virginia and will be attending the University of Richmond. She'll be moving there by the end of May, but first she'll finish up teaching her basic skills classes (at the Detroit Skating Club)."

The Hartsells have endured nothing but hard luck since winning the U.S. Pairs Championship in 1999.

Danielle suffered a broken kneecap during a practice fall in December of 1999, which resulted in the pair missing the entire 2000 season.

The former Junior World and Junior U.S. Champions, however, bounced back to win a bronze at the 2001 U.S. Senior Championships, but Steve missed six weeks late last summer with a toe injury.

Father Lawrence Hartsell then suffered a heart attack in December just prior to the U.S. Trials. (Georgia now happily reports that her husband is recovering and has not smoked a cigarette in three months.)

Their Olympic dream and a trip to Salt Lake City for the Winter Games was then shattered in January at the 2002 U.S. Nationals.

Steve pulled out with a torn groin muscle just prior to the long program at the Staples Center in Los Angeles after the pair were positioned in the fourth place following the short program.

"It's been hard for Danielle ever since she broke her kneecap," Georgia said. "She was not happy the last couple of years when she couldn't skate."

"She's ready to get on with rest of her life."

Professional offers never came their way either following the Nationals in California.

"They had an agent, Michael Rosenberg, of SFX, but he retired," Georgia said. "Once he left, they just didn't feel the support."

Mrs. Hartsell said Danielle plans to teach skating in Virginia while working toward a degree in Elementary Education.

"She wants to be near her boyfriend (Chris Minnis), who lives there," Georgia said. "He doesn't have anything to do with skating. Danielle met Chris when she and Steve were on a vacation Jamaica."

Steve, meanwhile, had to take a month off of skating following the groin injury, but is ready to resume training once he finds a new partner during a scheduled camp next month in Colorado Springs.

He will continue to teach lessons and train at the DSC. Steve also plans to return Johnny Johns and Mitch Meyer as his coaches. Steve will return to classes this fall at Oakland University after taking the year off from school to prepare for the Winter Games.

"Steve plans to stick it out for next years for the next Olympics," Georgia said. "He'd like to skate again because of the way it ended. His therapy is almost over and he's already

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starting to jump again.

"He hurt it the week before (the Nationals). He felt a twinge and it just kept coming on. He skated in the short program, but he knew he just couldn't continue and was afraid for Danielle if he tried do a lift."

"He was hurt and he was concerned about the both of them."

ed Wabash, 39-24.

"We wanted to finish well, go out and have some fun," said Clark, the Ocelots' top three-point marksmen. "It was the last time many of us would wear Schoolcraft on our chest, and I thought we showed some character."

Williams, selected to the 12-man All-Tournament team, averaged 17.2 points and 14 rebounds in Schoolcraft's four games. One college scout likened his game to former NBA All-Star

Alex English.

"Mike is a special player, not many players can do the things he does," Briggs said. "He also understands the game of basketball."

Harris, a University of Detroit Mercy signee, had an outstanding tournament as well, highlighted by a season and game-high 29 points in the tournament opener against Allegany.

But second-half foul problems in Friday's semifinal vs. Dixie may have cost Schoolcraft the

title.

Williams picked up his fourth with 13:07 to play and the Ocelots up by nine. Harris then fouled out with 3:17 left. During one stage of the second half all five Ocelot starters were on the bench in foul trouble.

Schoolcraft had 26 fouls to Dixie's 16.

Tournament MVP Jaime Liorena, a 6-9 center from Panama headed to LSU, riddled Schoolcraft for a game-high 30 points.

"That game is behind us," Briggs said. "Refs don't win or lose games. We tell our guys they always control their own destiny."

"They (Dixie) executed better down the stretch and there was a minute stretch for us where we didn't execute and we may have lost our composure."

"It was kind of hard to come back, but we play hard every game we step on the court. We might not play well every night, but we play hard."

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