



Monday, January 14, 2002

## OU athletes compete for Olympic spots

By **Jeff Samoray**, OU Web Writer

Several athletes who attended Oakland University recently competed for spots on the 2002 U.S. Olympic team, with one qualifying.

Jean Racine, a freshman performing arts major, earned a spot on the U.S. Olympic Bobsleigh team. She will participate with brakeman Gea Johnson in the first women's bobsleigh competition in Olympic history.

Racine, a 23-year-old native of Waterford, and her partner enter the 2002 games as one of the medal favorites – many sportswriters have picked them to win the gold. The duo set a track record in December during the U.S. Olympic trials at Park City, Utah. Their 48.92-second run broke the Utah Olympic Park record set in 2001 by Germany's Sandra Prokoff and Ulrike Holzner. Racine and her previous partner, Jen Davidson, finished first in the 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 World Cup standings and won nine of 12 World Cup races over that period, finishing no less than third. Racine also won three gold medals, five silver medals and finished second in the 1998-1999 World Cup season.

The other OU Olympic hopefuls include Danielle Hartsell, a sophomore pre-business major; Steve Hartsell, a sophomore pre-physical therapy major; Larisa Spielberg, a sophomore pre-physical therapy major; and Craig Joeright, a junior psychology major.

The Hartsells, a brother-sister duo from Ann Arbor, competed for national titles and qualifying spots on the U.S. Olympic team in the pairs competition during the **2002 U.S. Figure Skating Championships**, held Jan. 6-13 at the Staples Center in Los Angeles.

Each pairs' event includes a short program and free-skating (long) program. Skaters are judged on predetermined technical elements in the short program and elements of the skaters' choosing in the long program. The top two pairs were selected to represent the United States in the Olympics.

The Hartsells, who won the 1999 U.S. nationals pairs championship, were in fourth place after the short program, then were forced to withdraw from the competition when Steve suffered a groin injury. The duo trains at the Detroit Skating Club in Bloomfield Hills.

Spielberg, a native of Lansing, and Joeright, of Cleveland, also competed in the pairs event at the championships, finishing ninth in the short program and seventh overall. They train at the Onyx Ice Arena in Rochester. They won the Midwestern sectional in the pairs in 1999 and 2002.

The **2002 Winter Olympic Games** begin Friday, Feb. 8, in Salt Lake City. The women's bobsleigh competition is Tuesday, Feb. 19.

### SUMMARY

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