



Tuesday, February 12, 2002

Many OU students have been Olympians

By **Jeff Samoray**, OU Web Writer

Now that the **2002 Winter Olympic Games** in Salt Lake City are under way, OU freshman performing arts major **Jean Racine** is less than a week away from her race for the gold in the inaugural women's bobsleigh competition.

Even though Racine is OU's first Winter Olympic athlete, she is not the first OU student to stand in the Olympic spotlight. Other OU athletes have been there before:

Anita Rapp, a native of Lillehammer, Norway, and 2001 OU graduate in political science and German, became OU's first gold medal-winner at the 2000 Summer Olympics in Sydney. Rapp and the Norwegian soccer team won the gold by defeating the United States 3-2 in overtime.

Haitham Hassan, a senior mechanical engineering major, also participated in the 2000 games as a swimmer for Egypt. Hassan finished 53rd in the 100-meter butterfly, 51st in the 200-meter individual medley and 44th in the 100-meter backstroke.

One of the highlights of Hassan's Olympic experience was marching in the Parade of Athletes as part of the opening ceremonies.

"I was so happy, I couldn't take it," he said. "I was swimming the very next day, but I didn't care about getting tired or worn out. I wanted to be there. I had to see the opening ceremonies. It's only once in your life you get to be part of something like that. I was so ready to swim after that."

Jasna Reed, who graduated from OU in 2000 with a political science degree, won a bronze medal in women's doubles in table tennis at the 1988 Summer Olympics in Seoul. Reed, who at age 17 was the youngest-ever table tennis Olympic medalist, represented Yugoslavia during the 1988 and 1992 games, and the United States for the 2000 games.

Hilton Woods, who graduated from OU in 1992 with a medical laboratory science degree, represented Netherland Antilles in the 1988 games. He placed ninth in the 100-meter freestyle and 16th in the 50-meter freestyle and was the flag bearer for his country during those games. Woods also participated in the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles.

Pete Hovland, OU swimming coach, coached Hassan during the 2000 games and Woods in the 1988 Olympics.

Eric McIlquham, a former OU swimmer and 1992 graduate in psychology, was an assistant coach for the Egyptian team in 2000 and at the 1996 games in Atlanta. McIlquham currently is the swimming coach at the University of West Virginia.

Dario DiFazio, a 1995 OU graduate in management information systems, competed as a diver for his native Venezuela in the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona and in the 1996 Atlanta games. Each time he finished in the top 20 in the three-meter springboard and 10-meter platform. DiFazio is now an assistant diving coach at the University of Miami, Florida.

Two weeks after the close of the 2000 Summer Olympics, **Cheryl Angelelli**, a 1993 OU graduate in communications, competed in five different swimming events in the Paralympics, also held in Sydney. Angelelli's best finishes came in the 50- and 100-meter freestyle races, where she finished sixth. She also swam in the 4 x 50 free relay and helped the American team to a fifth-place finish.

You can watch the 2002 women's bobsleigh events on Tuesday, Feb. 19, on the NBC or CBC television networks. NBC coverage begins at 8 p.m., following the ladies figure skating short program. CBC coverage begins at 6 p.m., following the women's hockey semifinal. The closing ceremonies are Sunday, Feb. 24, at 8 p.m.

For more information about **Racine**, the bobsleigh competition and the Olympics, visit the official site of the **2002 Olympic Winter Games**.

Watch for a more in-depth article about Racine in the spring issue of OU Magazine. Please contact thenews@oakland.edu to report any additional OU Olympic athletes.

SUMMARY

Now that the 2002 Winter Olympics are under way, OU freshman performing arts major Jean Racine is less than a week away from her race for the gold. Even though Racine is OU's first Winter Olympic athlete, she is not the first OU student to stand in the Olympic spotlight. Six other OU community members have made it to the Games as athletes or coaches in the past, and one has competed in the Paralympic Games.

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