

Title at stake Saturday

This Saturday night, many years of hard work will finally pay off for three couples who are currently competing for the National Championship in the World Class Roller Skating Dance competition.

The top three couples from national competition will earn a spot on the U.S. team in the World Class Championships in Pensacola, Fla.

Seventeen couples are entered in nationals this week, but only eight couples will advance to the finals Saturday night.

The Original Set Pattern Dance Competition will take place Friday at 10:45 p.m. at Pershing Auditorium.

During the finals Saturday at 9:30 p.m., each couple will skate to their own choreographed music to deter-

mine the champion.

One of the favorites in this year's event is Allen Desterhaft and Julie Hider, last year's runner-up team.

"Saturday night will be an All-World Class competition in dance," Hider said. "It will be the best of skating and will be skating at it's best."

Desterhaft, 20, and Hider, 22, have been practicing together for seven years.

Their goal this year is to finish first at Nationals. They said they would like to finish first at World's, but a team from Germany will tough to beat.

Desterhaft is a sophomore at Ohio State University majoring in dance. Hider is a senior at Kent State Univer-

sity majoring in merchandising and is getting a minor in public relations.

Both said competing and school work is tough to keep up at times. They said they practice six to seven hours a day on the weekend and three to five hours a day during the week.

Desterhaft is also a professional teacher at the Fred Aistaire Dance Studio. He and Hider also compete in dance competitions and Hider also ice skates.

Hider said that although ice skating is similar to roller skating, they still have their differences.

"In ice skating, you can glide easier, and roller skating is more difficult," Hider said. "It's easier to be more graceful on ice."

**Stories by
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Roller skater captures her third national title

Although she has won other roller skating championships, 11-year-old Jennifer Kearn said her victory Tuesday night was special.

"I came in here hoping for a placement, but winning the championship is so much better," Kearn said.

Jennifer won the national championship in Elementary Girl's Figure Roller Skating at Pershing Auditorium.

It was the first year she competed in this event, but not her first roller skating championship.

She has won two Juvenile Figure Roller Skating championships.

Jennifer, who will enter the seventh grade in September, has been competing and practicing since she was four.

Jennifer's mother Marilyn said she went to a roller rink for fun and the manager, Jack Britland, was impressed with Jennifer because she was trying jumps and spins. He talked

Jennifer into trying artistic skating.

Jennifer now practices six days a week for two to three hours a day with her coach, Donna Bonell.

"I feel I am a hard worker, but I enjoy the challenges," Jennifer said. "I want to keep working at roller skating and learn new things, I want to get as good as I can."

Jennifer will return to her home in Whitehall, Pa., Sunday to compete in the Keystone Games. She is currently seeded No. 1.

Jennifer said her ultimate goal is to win at a world class level and compete in the Olympic Games, if roller skating becomes a competition sport at the games.

Jennifer's dad, Robert, said that although it is difficult at times, the family continues to support her.

"The bucks may get tight at times," Robert said. "She works hard and it is nice to see it pay off. It makes it all worth it."

Clockwise from far left: Jodi Davidson and John Fetrow celebrate after winning the junior pairs title Tuesday at the National Roller Figure Skating Championships. Jennifer Kearn receives her championship plaque for elementary girls' division. Kyoko Harada and Richard Green glide across the wood floor during the Vienesse Waltz dance competition. World class and junior skaters share mirrors and the spotlight at nationals.

