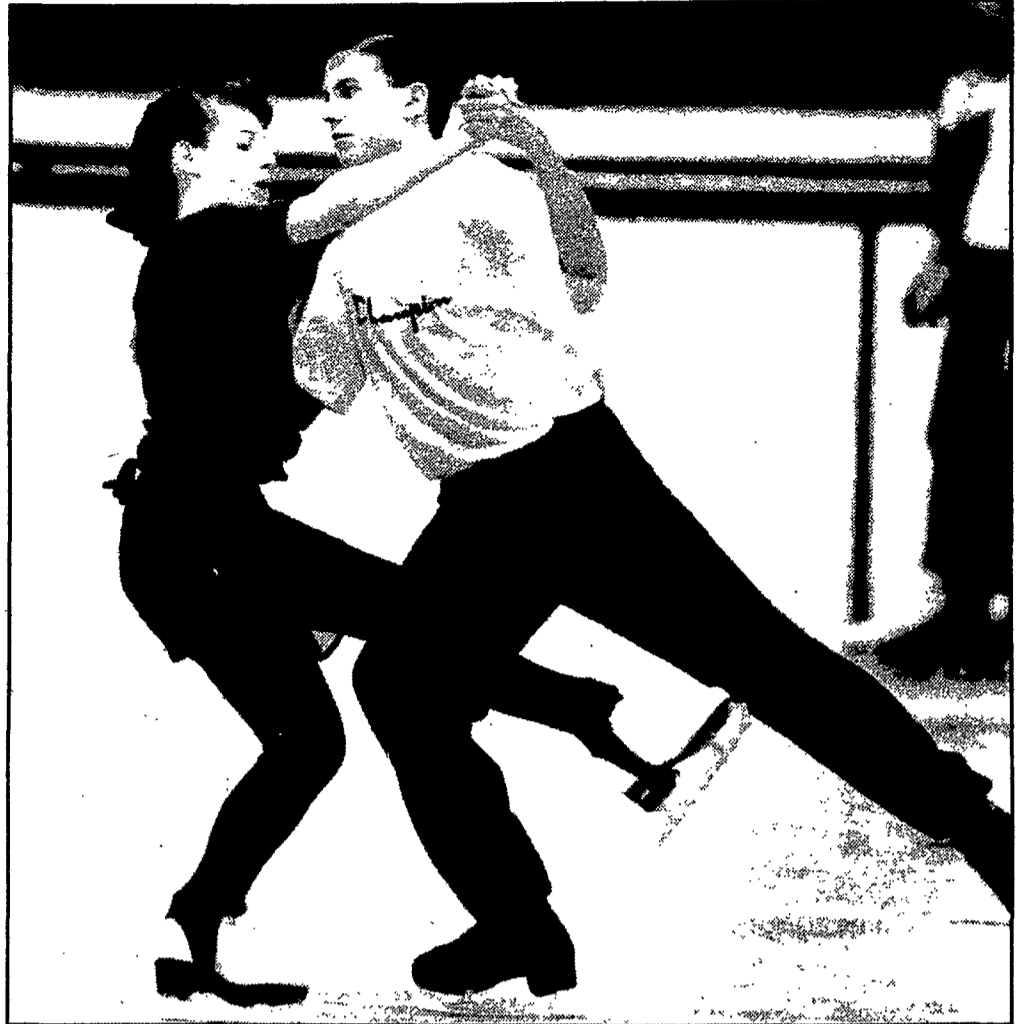




John Schultz, a parishioner of St. Rita's Church in Webster and member of the Genesee Figure Skating Club, concentrates on his figures during a recent practice session at Rochester Institute of Technology's Ritter Ice Arena.



S. John Wilkin/Staff photographer
John Schultz, who competes in pairs, freeskating and dance, practices with his dance partner Maia Wilkin. The duo is preparing for the North Atlantic Championships in Potsdam, N.Y., in November.

Skater sets the record straight on his sport

By Mike Latona
Staff writer

HENRIETTA — John Schultz would prefer to see more media coverage of figure skating on the sports page — and less in the tabloid section.

The 15-year-old Webster resident believes his sport is occasionally hindered by a variety of mistaken perceptions, a prime example being the publicity arising from the Nancy Kerrigan-Tonya Harding episodes earlier this year.

"The opinion was that everyone in figure skating hated each other," Schultz remarked during a recent practice at the Rochester Institute of Technology's Ritter Ice Arena, where he trains with the Genesee Figure Skating Club.

"It is competitive, but we cheer for each other when we're at competitions," he added. "We're not saying, 'I hope they fall down.'"

Schultz also acknowledges that most people think of another sport when he says he's a skater.

"They say, 'Oh, you play hockey? What team are you on?'" remarked the teen, who, ironically, shares the same last name as former National Hockey League tough guy Dave Schultz.

And although figure skating does not lend itself to the dislodged teeth and brutal forechecks of hockey, Schultz points out that his sport can be grueling at times.

"It takes a lot of stamina. People don't

Cheerleading camp set for July 25-29 at Fisher

PITTSFORD — St. John Fisher College has scheduled a cheerleading camp for July 25-29 at the campus, 3690 East Ave.

The camp will run from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day and is open to girls ages 8 to 14. It will be conducted by Kim Trimm, Fisher's head cheerleading coach, and members of the Cardinals' varsity squad.

For more information, call 716/385-8309 or 289-8669.

know how hard it is," he said, noting the amount of strength it takes to lift a partner off the ice during pairs routines.

By the same token, Schultz said that awareness of figure skating usually enjoys an upswing during an Olympic year.

"It doesn't seem to be a mainstream sport. (But when it's on television), most people are pretty amazed by what you can do," he said. "When the Olympics come around, membership at our club always goes up."

Schultz has been skating since the age of 6. He is practicing 20 hours per week during the summer months as he readies for the North Atlantic Championships this fall and a possible trip to the junior nationals. Two years ago, he and partner Kim Murphy won the North Atlantic pairs competition.

Schultz is hoping that his skating achievements will someday help him become an astute instructor.

"I'm not going for the Olympics or anything. But the more tests I pass, the more things I can teach," he commented.

Schultz said he first got the teaching bug two years ago, when he helped teach a contingent of beginning skaters at Manhattan Square Park in downtown Rochester. Currently, he lends assistance to a number of younger competitors who are new to the Genesee Figure Skating Club.

His extracurricular efforts go well beyond the skating rink. At Webster High School — where he has just completed his sophomore year — Schultz serves on committees dealing with drug-and-alcohol awareness, peer intervention and sexual harassment. Other high-school activities include ski club, newspaper writing and playing piano for the jazz band.

In addition, Schultz is an active member of St. Rita's Parish in Webster, where he serves as a lector.

Schultz said he prefers to maintain a full agenda.

"If it was something I was forced to do, I'd be sick of it. But I like doing these things," he concluded.



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