



## **Saint Viator Grad Pairs up for U.S. Figure Skating Nationals**



Danny O'Shea of Gurnee and Jessica Calalang of Glenview practice their routine for the U.S. Figure Skating National Championships.

Saint Viator High School graduate Danny O'Shea of Gurnee makes his fourth appearance at the U.S. Figure Skating National Championships this week, but for the first time with a partner.

He and Jessica Calalang of Glenview qualified as one of the top 12 pairs in the country, in the novice division, after skating together for less than a year.

"We don't quite have all the twists and lifts polished the way some of the pairs do who have been together for years," O'Shea says. "But we hope to even it all out with the difficulty in our jumps."

They open at nationals with the short program on Sunday<1/17>, skated to "The Godfather" theme, before skating their longer free skate final on Monday<1/18>.

"Their program features side by side triple salchow jumps, as well as a double axel sequence, that really separates them," says their coach, Jeremy Allen, a former national pairs skater. "No other couple has that."

Even as recently as December, they added a throw double flip to their free skate program, in an effort to ramp up the difficulty and score quotient from the judges.

"It has the highest point value," O'Shea says. "The first day we tried it, she nailed it."

The pair trains at the Northbrook Ice Arena and North Shore Ice Arena in Northbrook as well as at the Twin Rinks Ice Pavilion in Buffalo Grove.

Their workout starts in the morning before school, and they return nearly every afternoon after school, in a regimen that combines off-ice conditioning and ballet, with on ice training in their singles and pairs skating routines.

O'Shea graduated with high honors in 2009 from Saint Viator, where he successfully balanced a rigorous academic load with his skating regimen. He now is a full time student at Loyola University in Chicago.

In March, he began training with Calalang --- a freshman at Glenbrook South High School --- in pairs, while also continuing his singles skating.

While both point to making the 2014 Olympic team as one of their goals, they say they are not focused on that going into nationals.

"I'd say it's a long term goal," O'Shea says, "but right now, all our energy is focused on skating our best and improving our sectional scores, at nationals."