

[Magazine article is missing in action; here is the original copy.]

MICHELLE ROARK

At age 15, this Denver, Colo., athlete traded her figure skates for a pair of skis, but she didn't change her dream of becoming a world champion. A decade later, Roark is the reigning World Cup dual moguls champion--and already has her sights firmly set on gold in the 2002 Winter Olympics.

Born: November 16, 1973 (age 26)

Ice dreams: "I saw Dorothy Hamill on TV when I was 5 and I knew I wanted to be a figure skater. My parents promised that if we moved back to Colorado--where my parents were from--that I could figure skate. When I was 7, we moved to Denver and I started taking lessons. The first time I went skating I could do jumps and spins. It came naturally."

Labor of love: "I started competing right away and winning. For eight years, I skated six hours a day, five days a week. I would get up at 4:30 a.m. I loved it. I trained with world champion Debi Thomas. When I was 14, I was the youngest skater in the national championships and I finished in the top 25."

The end: "I had to quit skating when I was 15 because my parents got divorced and we couldn't afford it anymore. Figure skating was costing more than \$20,000 a year. I was devastated... figure skating was my whole life."

The beginning: "I decided that if I couldn't succeed in figure skating, I was going to succeed in something else--skiing. I had always skied on weekends with my father and two brothers at Winter Park. My father loved skiing moguls and he had taught us. When I was 16, I joined the Winter Park freestyle program."

Ups and downs and ups: "That very first year of competing in moguls, I finished seventh at the national championships and was named to the U.S. Ski Team. But then I missed the next three seasons because of two knee injuries. It's been up and down like that for years until last season when I won the dual (head-to-head) World Cup moguls title. It was awesome."

Expression session: "So much of my figure skating background has carried over into skiing. The edge control, balance, agility, body awareness and competitiveness. In figure skating, your personality comes out. It's the same way in freestyle mogul skiing. I like the *free* in freestyle."

Skate escape: "I travel with my figure skates and still skate for fun. I can still do double jumps."

Engineering fun: "My father is a chemical engineer and I've always wanted to be one. I've been taking classes at the Colorado School of Mines for years, with a major in chemical engineering and a minor in environmental science. Professors have told me to choose engineering or skiing. I tell them I want to do both."

Golden goal: "I'll just be hitting my prime for the 2002 Winter Olympics. Competing would be heaven. There's nothing I want more. It would be a dream come true."

--Reade Bailey