

## **Athlete Profile - Jessica Gregg**

Her mother, Kathy Gregg, was a speed skater who represented Canada at the 1976 Innsbruck and the 1980 Lake Placid games. Her father, Randy Gregg, renowned as a defenceman for the Edmonton Oilers, also played hockey for Canada's teams in Lake Placid and Calgary. It was in Lake Placid, in fact, that Gregg's parents met. So, was it inevitable that Jessica Gregg would set her sites on the Olympics?

"Yes and no," says the 20 year-old short track speed skater. Growing up in Edmonton there was "really no pressure" for Gregg and her three siblings. "We weren't pushed into sports. We all loved sports of course, and we tended to take up the sports our parents loved as well." Gregg first donned her mother's speed skates on their backyard rink at the age of five.

So how, with a long track skater for a role model, did she choose short track? (Short track hadn't even been invented at the time of her mother's Olympics.) "I started in long track, and Mom tried to encourage me in that direction. But when I was 16 a chance came up to try out for the World Junior short track team. I didn't expect to make the team, but I did, and I did pretty well. I just loved it, and I stuck with it."

Gregg moved to Calgary at age 17 to continue her training at the Olympic Oval and has been on the World Cup short track circuit for three years now. After numerous medals at the junior level, she skated in her first senior World Championships in 2008, winning a silver medal in the relay. She was ranked fifth in Canada in 2007-08.

She also studies kinesiology part-time at the University of Calgary. Her studies may lead to a future career, but for now, thoughts of the future are dominated by the Olympic trials in August of this year. Doing her best at those trials means training twice a day, six days a week. Any spare time she has, and "there's not a

lot,” is spent with friends, watching movies, snowboarding, and just being a typical young student.

If she qualifies for Vancouver, Gregg will actually be making her second trip to the Olympics. Born in March 1988, she came to Calgary “in my Mom’s belly,” to watch her father play for Canada, or so she’s told. Vancouver will be her chance to make some Olympic memories of her own. “Being in Vancouver, in front of a Canadian crowd, that would really be special.”