

# Zack sets sights on Winter Olympics

A FLAGSTONE figure skating teen flew to the US last week to get his 2014 Winter Olympics bid under way.

Fifteen-year-old Zack Ockendon will spend the next three weeks in California where he will work on his routine with seven-time Australian champion figure skater and Winter Olympian Anthony Liu.

Zack, who earned a silver medal at the State Figure Skating Junior Championships earlier this year, took up the sport three years ago, after finding inspiration from an unexpected source.

"We were watching Disney On Ice and I just wanted to know how they did the tricks," he explained.

"So I went to one of the public sessions and then found out about skate school and it just started from there."

Earlier this year Zack travelled to Switzerland for the Junior World Championships and helped Australia achieve its best placing yet.

"We were the highest Australian team that ever went to the Junior Worlds. I think we finished 16 out of 23 teams," he said.

After starting off in synchronised skating, he recently defected to figure skating and hasn't looked back since.

"The figure skating side is a lot different to synchronised, which I came from," he said.

"I've always done both but I still found challenges in figure that I didn't in sync so I've just moved on. I'm focussing on figure skating for the future and the 2014 Winter Olympics."

During his US trip, Zack said he hopes to perfect his technique with the help of Liu, who is now retired but still holds the distinction of being the highest placed Australian ice skater.

"I'll be working on new jumps, more rotation, more height and more speed. Anthony's known as one of the best jump specialists of all time," he said.

With his sights set on the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia, Zack will spend next year sharing time between China, the US and Australia to train for the Games.

"I'm very excited to travel and see the world and see the skating and make new friends," he said.



Flagstone figure skater Zack Ockendon is in the US to train for the 2014 Winter Olympics.