

club sports

Cross country ski 'boom' hits Oregon team

By NICK DAWSON
Of the Emerald

In the 1976 Winter Olympics in Innsbruck, Austria, a 20-year-old from the United States set the cross country world on its ear with a stunning silver medal performance in the 50-kilometer cross country race.

His name was Bill Koch. He was from Vermont. And he helped to flame the fires of an already gusty inferno called the cross country skiing boom.

That boom has been primarily in the area of cross country skiing called touring. However, Koch was a racer. And racing is what is

of interest to Paul Daly, the coach of the cross country portion of the Club Sports skiing team.

Daly has been 'into' cross country racing for about four years, getting his first baptism into the sport while touring. He wanted to get better, and so joined the Club Sports team two years ago when he was a graduate student in physical education. He now coaches along with his duties as a substitute instructor at Oregon.

Daly has seen the sport change over the years.

"The sport has changed so rapidly in the last four years," said Daly. "It's hard to keep up with everything as a coach and as a racer."

He explained such areas as equipment, training and technique have drastically changed, especially technique, where many more competitors are depending on strength.

However, Daly was quick to add the changes have been for the better. "It's all made the sport more exciting."

Daly coaches only one-half of the club sports skiing team. The other half, coached by Randy Rogers, concentrates on the alpine races. Daly's team has made steady improvement over the course of the season.

One major problem Daly faces is that many of his team members, in both men's and women's competition, also race in the alpine events. Besides creating prob-

lems of fatigue on the course, training is hampered by the split time many of the team members face.

Training is very important to the racers. Since Oregon can't go up to the mountains to train, dry land practicing, such as hill climbing with poles, roller skiing and weight training, are important. Daly is especially concerned with the physiological factors involving practicing at this elevation and racing at about 6,500 feet.

However, there is always another way.

"What a lot of skiers are doing is racing into shape," said Daly. "Those are the best kind of training sessions there can be."

Most of the members of both teams are relative beginners, ac-

cording to Daly. Aven Switzer is the top woman racer, though she is only in her second year. Gina Green and Elaine Powers are seniors, as is Switzer. Green is only in her first year of racing, but has been impressive lately. Sandy Kobrock and Cheryl Hukari compete in alpine racing, besides cross country.

Randy Rogers and Charlie Skinner compete in cross country and alpine for the Oregon squad. The top two racers throughout the year for the men's team have been Dick Murray and Kirk Nielson. Tony Hyun has also raced well for the Ducks.

As a matter of fact, if you ask Daly, they've all worked hard.

Which is the way Bill Koch would have it of course.



Photo by Bruce Jackson

Aven Switzer is the top woman cross country skier for coach Paul Daly's squad. The team has been improving consistently throughout the year, and will race again this weekend.

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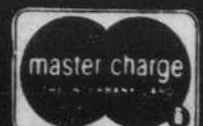
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