

Skiers excel despite lack of funds

Coach exudes confidence

By DOUG McRAE
Of the Emerald

Oregon's ski team overcame a lack of funding and scholarship athletes to finish second in the 20-school Northwest Collegiate Ski Conference last year. Coach Randy Rogers is confident the club sports squad can finish first in the conference this season.

"Competing against teams with paid coaches, paid travel and equipment and scholarship athletes is tough, but it really is nice to beat them," says Rogers.

"People come here to go to school. Other teams go to school to race. We can't expect the same things of our athletes as others can of their scholarship athletes. It is difficult when you're racing at such a high level and there is no recognition. You can't expect the same amount of training time when Mom and Dad are paying the bills, Rogers says.

The lack of practice time on snow also hurts the team, he says. Travel time to and from Mt. Bachelor was one reason the squad couldn't work out on snow much last year. This situation should improve as the team will be working out at Willamette Pass this year.

The club has about 75 members, 40 of whom are active, Rogers says. The size of the squad will allow the club to maintain two competitive teams.

"If somebody has a test or something we have enough people that are good enough that we will have somebody to fill in," he says.

Rogers says there is little difference talent-wise among the skiers.

In the men's skimeister, or all-around, Rogers says the top skiers are Hank Flake, who tied for NWCSC Skimeister championship last year and was the Oregon State high school all-around champ in 1976; Gary Davidson, a former Can-Am and junior national racer; Craig Poulson, and Dick Lindsey, one of the squad members to hold elite status among Northwest skiers, the highest ranking one can attain in the region.

In the men's slalom, Paul White, runner-up in the conference finals last year, and Flake appear to be the team's front runners.

In the men's giant slalom, Scott Kime, a past junior national racer from Eugene is the team's leading skier.

Dick Murray, Tony Hyun, and Robert Mittet of Norway are among the team's leading cross country racers, Rogers says.

The men dominated the conference last year, but missed winning at the conference finals because the team peaked too early, Rogers says. This year a schedule that leaves an open week before the finals and a large team with depth should help the team's performance.

The women have won the NWCSC championship two years running and appear to be strong again this year.

In the slalom, assistant coach Evelyn Duffy, who has won the conference championship the last three years is the team's top skier. Monica McClain and Lisa Culver, who also runs the 400 meters for the track team, are also good in this event.

Rogers says McClain, Culver and Krisy Knight will compete in the Skimeister competition.

In the giant slalom, Rogers says there is little difference between Knight, Val Sloan, and Kristy Mathis.

Cross country might be the women's weakest event, but Rogers says he hopes to get good performances from Leslie Opp and Stacey Spracher.

Overall team depth and experience should help the men qualify for the National Collegiate Ski Conference championships in March and the women qualify for the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women national championships.

The NCSC championships are being held for the first time this year for teams qualifying for but not participating in the NCAA meet. "I can't imagine teams much better than us," says Rogers.

He says he will know more about the team after members have had a chance to get in some skiing. After the workouts over Christmas break, Rogers says he should be able to determine how well the squad will perform during the 1979 season.



Evelyn Duffy, top skier on the women's ski team, concentrates on a turn in the Hantak Cup Giant Slalom held at Mt. Bachelor, one of several events in which she placed first last year.

Photo courtesy of ski team

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