

Men's, women's ski teams seek titles

By STEVE JETT
Of the Emerald

Coach Randy Rogers speaks optimistically about how Oregon's ski team will fare at the AIAW Northwest Regionals this week, but he admits both the men and women will have some hurdles to cross.

For the women, the challenge will be contending with season-long nemesis Central Oregon Community College, who has won the National Junior College Championship three years in a row. The problem for the men is more serious. They will be seeking to find the consistency they have lacked all season.

The women will be in Bozeman, Montana for the regional qualifying meet, and attempt to gain a berth in the National AIAW championships at Boyne Mountain, Michigan. The men will hold their regionals at Mt. Hood.

Rogers has mixed feelings about the past season, which saw the men finish fourth in the Northwest Collegiate Ski Conference and the women an impressive second.

"The men have not skied up to my expectations and the women have skied up and beyond what I expected," explains Rogers.

But despite the fourth place finish, Rogers insists the men "could clean up."

"They (men) just have not put it together as a whole team this season," says Rogers. "And even though they have not won a meet all



Photo by Bruce Jackson

Freshman Val Sloan, one of the ski team's top racers this season, will compete in the downhill, slalom and giant slalom in Bozeman, Mont. this week in the

regional qualifying meet. The Duck women hope to challenge Central Oregon Community College for the team title.

year, they could qualify for the nationals. There is every possibility in the world they could win the (regional) championship. I sure would like to see them come out of the woodwork and win."

And if the men don't, the women, certainly may. Heading the cast will be freshman Monica McClain, who Rogers describes as the "best girl

on the West Coast this year."

"She has won five out of 10 races this season and she has been near the top in the events she did not win," explains Rogers of McClain, who won the Ski Meister at the Oregon State Invitational two weeks ago. The honor signifies the top overall skier in the slalom, giant slalom, and downhill.

"She has been getting a lot more confident," says Rogers. "she can ski flat out down the hill without holding back and that is what makes her so good."

Val Sloan, who excelled at the OSU invitational, also will help out. "We got her some new boots," says Rogers. "And she just smoked."

More importantly, Rogers has no-

ticed something special about Sloan and McClain.

"It is kind of funny," he says. "A lot of girls come in (to Oregon) and do real well. But because of being involved in school, they sort of begin drifting off (from skiing). But the two of them (Sloan and McClain) are really hard-driven."

Sophomore Christie Matthes, who has been finishing in the top ten places most of the season, could also play a part in the Ducks' success. But Oregon has been playing second fiddle most of the season to Central Oregon.

"They (Oregon women) have beaten everyone in the Northwest but COC," says Rogers. "and they have been the only team close to Central Oregon."

How well the Oregon men fair depends greatly on the challenges from College of Idaho and Eastern Oregon State College. In addition, the Ducks' Gary Davidson has been among-the-top-five-finishing spots "in almost every race," says Rogers. "he has a chance to win it."

The Oregon men received a big boost at the OSU invitational when Hank Flake won the giant slalom. As Rogers says, "It showed the rest of the guys that they could be winners."

Dick Murray and Robert Mittel have anchored the cross-country skiers all season. "The two of them have been in the top ten in every race this season," continues Rogers.

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