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hazardous."

Allen got into the sport two years after graduating from Portland's Benson High School in 1981, during a 4,300-mile bike tour of the western states. He saw some events for the first time and got hooked. "I just decided this was what I wanted to do," he said.

After two years at Portland State University and several races against the Oregon club sport team, he decided on a change of scenery. "I'd raced against most of them (on the Oregon team) during the past," he said. "Through that I found out that I had a pretty good opportunity of getting involved in architecture and cycling at the same time."

The club sport cycling team, which he is now a part of, has played an integral part in luring him here. "They've financed most of what I'm doing," Allen said.

The bikes used in the competition are 10-speeds in design, but feature different shifters, brakes and knobby tires. "It's different completely," Allen said.

Each race consists of doing laps, usually through a public park, for an hour plus one lap. "They take 7 to 8 minutes per lap, where on the open road I could do it in two," Allen said.

Looking ahead to the national championships at hand, Allen felt as though he was in a good position to make the world team. "I've had a really good fall (for practicing)," he said. "I'd like to go to the world meet at the amateur level."

Competing at the world level, though, has not been a strong point for Americans. The best

U.S. finish in the world championships was by former Eugene resident and national champion Lawrence Malone, who finished 33rd in 1978.

Allen, however, holds hope for the future. The professional cyclocross circuit, which has yet to be indented by an American, is an outside goal of his.

"If I improve over the next couple years, and then get my act together, who knows?"

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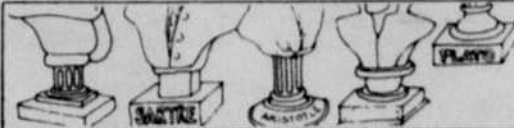
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