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## Skiers ready for tournaments

By Kurt Zimmer  
Emerald Contributor

The University alpine and nordic ski teams eagerly are anticipating the beginning of their seasons at the UO Time Trials Dec. 19-20, assuming enough snow falls on Oregon's moun-

tains within the next month. The club's 50 alpine and 20 nordic skiers began dry land training Oct. 12.

In fact, the state's worst drought of the century has made the land a little too dry for club members, according to coordinator and alpine coach Jim Malgren. "Our first week on snow is usually the week before Thanksgiving," he said.

The alpine teams make the 75-mile trip to Hoodoo Ski Bowl, near Sisters, for practice when the snow arrives, while the nordic squads travel three hours each way to Mt. Bachelor near Bend.

The weather aside, Malgren is looking forward to the 1987-88 season. "This is easily the strongest squad of skiers assembled at the U of O in recent memory — at least the last five years," he claimed. "We have a really strong group of coaches and a lot better skiers in general. We have a really strong 'B' team program this year too." The 'A' teams consist of the top seven athletes in each type of skiing.

Coaching the alpine teams this year are Malgren, Rick Roberts, Geir Skaaden and Bob Fix, while Alex Margolin and Tom Aunan coach the nordic skiers. Skaaden coached at the national level in Norway for two years and Roberts has seven years of coaching experience in the Northwest, Malgren said.

Margolin was excited to have former Team USA nordic skier Bill Koch work with his team last month, and he promises he will be back in the future. Koch, who won Olympic silver in 1976 and won the 1983 World Cup event, was the innovator of nordic skiing's skating technique. Also guest coaching was current nationally ranked Team USA member Leslie Kritchko.

The University ski club is a member of the National Collegiate Ski Association and the southern division of the Northwest Ski Conference. Other southern division members are Oregon State, Lewis and Clark College, Portland State, Oregon Institute of Technology, Reed College, Southern Oregon State

College and Central Oregon Community College, all Oregon schools.

"Right now we're mostly concerned with building the team and raising our competitive level, both in terms of the University and the whole division," Malgren said. "The southern division has traditionally been weaker than the rest of the conference. The USSA (United States Ski Association) has sanctioned all of our races this year. That really increases the level of competition — it makes it more serious."

"There is no reason why we shouldn't win divisionals in men's and women's alpine. Women's nordic should contend for the top spot, and so should the men's. All of our teams should be contenders for the divisional titles and we should be able to give a big scare to the traditional conference powerhouses."

Powers of the northern division are Washington, Pacific Lutheran, British Columbia and Simon Fraser, while Montana State, Rocky Mountain College, Washington State, Whitman College and College of Idaho are the best of the eastern division, Malgren said. The MSU and CI teams placed in the top three at last year's national event.

"At this point, I'd have to say that our chances at the nationals are pretty slim," he said. "We're a definite long shot because we're still in the process of building the club and increasing our competitiveness. We do have some individuals who will have a real shot at going to nationals, though."

The ski club's first three competitions are all scheduled for Hoodoo Ski Bowl: The UO Time Trials Dec. 19-20, the OSU Beaver Cup Jan. 9-10 and the UO Duck Cup Jan. 16-17. The COCC Cup will be held Jan. 22-23 at Mt. Bachelor, followed by the LCC Pioneer Cup Jan. 19-21 at Mt. Hood Meadows and SOSOC's Raider Cup at Mt. Ashland Feb. 6-7.

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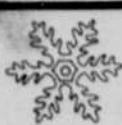
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