SPORTS

Winter Olympics... Snobby ABC shuns coverage

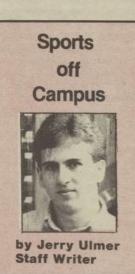
CALGARY—The Olympic events that ABC chooses to televise are the glitzy ones with rich international heritage; figure skating, cross country skiing, biathlon, hockey, etc. The glamour and prestige of the biathlon is enough to capture any child's imagination, many of whom will begin practicing in their backyards upon the commencement of The Games.

But while ABC spent millions to cover this shindig, they still are showing us only what they want us too see. It became apparent a week before The Games that ABC would blatantly disregard some of the lesser-known events, claiming they would damage the Olympic spirit. The late pullout made it impossible for Mizlou or Raycom to tie up a contract, so the events went largely ignored. Except here.

CROSS COUNTRY LUGE-A young sport still trying to get its legs, its founders claim to have brainstormed the idea from the old Norelco ad where Santa tools through the countryside on an electric shaver. Although the sport has been plagued by injuries and deaths thus far, Alessandro Petrocelli of Italy made history this year by becoming the first man ever to survive a 30-kilometer luge event, delicately negotiating the Canmore Moguls.

TIRE CHAIN RELAY-This is the one alpine event not predicted by Nostradamus. This four-man relay combines speed and dexterity as the teams move slowly up a mountain road taking tire chains on and off a Subaru. The favored Soviet team suffered a drawback when brakeman Yuri Petroslav elbowed the gearshift while changing radio stations, causing chainman Sergei Petin to break 73 bones in his right hand. Petroslav left the games early to do some volunteer work at a day care center on the Kamchatka Peninsula

ALPINE SKI DIVING—Greg Louganis finally yielded to public outcry and brought home one of the most underpublicized gold medals in Olympic history. Louganis remains the only man in the world who can do a gainer into a hot tub wearing a pair of Rossignols.



HYPOTHERMIC TRIATHLON—Just as the Iron-

man Triathlon got its name from a characteristic of the race, so does this. Competitors go for a seven mile Arctic swim, skate 20 miles across the frozen tundra, and then are inhumanely required to ice fish until discovered by a polar bear. The difficulty is compounded by the mandatory donning of Gotcha gear until the finish. Spectators line the route with cups of boiling water.

DOGSLED RACING—No surprise here, as the Soviet dogs cruised to a gold, despite allegations of blood doping. Jimmy the Greek shed a different light on the scene, claiming the Soviet dogs are bred for racing, that's why their legs come way up in the back. Coaches argued that Soviet dogs are groomed to be Olympians from the time they are puppies. "Racing is their life," said Canadian Coach Doug McKenzie. "Dogs in the western world have other interests. Some of the Soviet dogs have never had a cheeseburger." The Mexican Chihuahua team finished last.

ICE WALL REPELL-ING—In retrospect, this demonstration sport looks like the biggest mistake since the biathlon was held indoors at the Olympic Oval. The event was marred when Austria's Hans Hochbrau plunged to a yodelling death on his way down the side of the 800-foot glacier. On the bright side, Hans' time of 24.68 seconds set a world record and the gold medal was placed on his casket on the victory stand. That works out to 32 feet per second for you physics students.

DOWNHILL HOCKEY-This bizarre sport was derived from the last "Battle of the Network Stars." Czechoslovakia actually scored a goal on opening day and it stood up for a gold medal

AVALANCHE INDUC-ING—While East Germany tried buzzing the mountain with a 747, in the end it was Canada's Pierre Rouchette delighting his homeland when his two-fingered doggie whistle buried an Eskimo village.

NORDIC CHESS—The longrunning duel between Kasparov and Karpov of the Soviet Union continued in Calgary. Kasparov was a move away from checkmating Karpov's king when he fell out of the bobsled. After claiming he was pushed, Kasparov showed his indifference by lighting a Marlboro on the Olympic Flame at the closing ceremonies.

Jerry Ulmer is not in Calgary, but he would like you to think that he is. PASS ALONG AN HEIRLOOM MORE

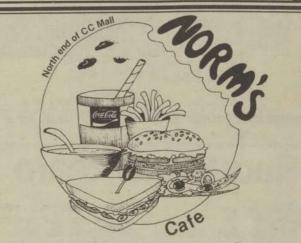
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