

Nordic team prepares for Happy Jack races

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Branding Iron

Who will you pursue this Valentine's weekend? That's the question and the theme for this year's Cowboy Chase: Nordic Pursuit Race hosted by the UW nordic ski team.

The four-race series will consist of a 7.5 km freestyle race at 10 a.m. Saturday and a 15 km classic pursuit at 9:30 a.m.

on Sunday.

A children's/beginner pursuit at 4km and a 3 km classic will also be offered.

Both the men's and women's Nordic ski teams remain unbeaten heading into their home event, winning Colorado competitions in Frisco, Leadville, and Steamboat Springs.

For the women's side, three-time national champion Jennifer Kinner of Casper has won all her races this season. Adding to the success of the team

is Kristen Boroff, from Pinedale, who has challenged Kinner for the overall lead, finishing just behind her by a few seconds in each race.

Five-time All-American Brooke Umphlett, of Casper, has also qualified for the national meet with her two teammates along with Melissa Gangl, also of Casper, Ava Bell of Laramie and Erika Edgely of Lake Placid, N.Y.

"Our women's team is even stronger this season than last year, which won the

national title," UW coach Christi Boggs said in a press release. "The men's team also is a lot stronger and it looks like they will be able to challenge for the championship title."

The Cowboys, who finished second at last year's nationals behind Clarkson College, are led by Riley Hopeman, a national qualifier from Lander, who has won two of the three races this season. Adam Alspach of Casper, also a national

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qualifier, won the other race.

"Clarkson is looking really tough this year because they have all their skiers back, so they won't be easy to beat," Boggs said. "But we have a team that should make them nervous."

The races this weekend will begin each day from the Tie City Parking Lot

near Happy Jack. The cost to enter is \$15 per race or \$20 for the whole weekend, with the beginner races costing \$10.

The proceeds from the event will go to help the UW nordic ski team attend the United States Ski and Snowboard Association nationals in Sugarloaf, Maine.

The overall men's and women's winners will receive a hand-knitted Nordic hat. Prizes will be awarded Saturday at the ski team benefit at 6 p.m. at the Laramie High School cafeteria.

Cost is \$6 per person for the pasta meal and additional drawing tickets will be available at \$1 apiece or six for \$5.

For more information about the events this weekend or the UW nordic ski club, contact Boggs or Rachel Watson at 742-6485, or E-mail uwski@yahoo.com.

More information on both the team and this weekend's events can be found at the nordic team homepage at <http://ed.uwyo.edu/gradstudent/ski>.