

# Wyoming ski teams sweep home event



Shannon M. Valenti/Branding Iron

UW ski team captain Riley Hopeman won the skate style race on Saturday and placed second on Sunday.

## BI Staff Report

The gods were smiling on the UW Nordic skiing team last weekend, with the Cowgirls and Cowboys sweeping the field both Saturday and Sunday.

"The weather and the snow were perfect," junior Justin Daraie said. After winning the classic style race on Sunday, Daraie said, "It was a hard weekend but the races were fun, with enough competition to keep it exciting."

With UW winning every collegiate race in the region since January, the feeling of domination from the past weekend is not entirely unknown. Yet team captain Riley Hopeman said he owes much of what the team has achieved to its coaches, Christi Boggs and Rachel Watson.

"They are great coaches who work year round so we can have a successful season," Hopeman said. "They organize all of the races we attend and the practices, keeping our training at the right levels and helping us to be the fastest possible."

Which he is accomplishing, winning the skate style race on Saturday and coming in a close second on Sunday.

But neither Hopeman nor Daraie are feeling relaxed and comfortable in their leads, they said, with freshmen Colin McRann and Joshua Peterson and sophomore Adam Al-

spach all trailing seconds behind.

The Cowgirls, NSCSA National Champions last year, also remain undefeated, and "are only getting stronger," according to senior team president Brooke Umphlett.

"Every year we get more girls, and every year we get faster," she added. "We have a number of new skiers this year, and we have been consistently claiming the top five spots in the races this year."

Umphlett also said she credits the coaches – and hard work on part of the athletes – for the team's current strength and success.

Boggs and Watson, who are both veteran skiers themselves, said it was a successful weekend from start to finish.

"Everybody raced really well and we ended up raising a lot of money for nationals this year in Sugarloaf, Maine," Boggs said. "There was an amazing amount of support from people in the community both as racers and spectators."

Co-coach Watson said, "The team this year has gotten a lot stronger and has a lot more depth – we used to have two or three really fast skiers and we have six (now) – and there's a lot more people who are actively involved in the club. We are incredibly proud of all of our athletes."

The team leaves Friday for Eldora, Colo. to compete in its first NCAA race.