



Who to watch in the USCSA

Like playing football at a Pac-10 or Big 12 school, skiing for an NCAA Division 1 team is the "big show" at the college level. But it's not the only game in town. The U.S. Collegiate Snowsports Association oversees 88 percent of all collegiate ski programs in North America, with more than 150 colleges and 3,800 athletes under its umbrella.

One of the few USCSA colleges to offer athletic scholarships, perennial alpine favorite Sierra Nevada College has always attracted top skiers from

Europe, many of whom are competitive with NCAA-level skiers. This year, three new women from Sweden are enrolled at the small college along the shores of Lake Tahoe.

"On the men's side, the addition of Michael Weyermann, a top-level skier from Switzerland, with a World Cup background, will give us the boost we need to reclaim the national title," said new coach Gro Kvinlog, herself a multiple USCSA champion from Sierra Nevada.

veterans and several young talents for turning promising talents into top-10 material. Just look at DeYong. Once pack fill, she brought home NCAA hardware last year.

Last March, the Sierra Nevada men's team lost the USCSA overall team title for the first time in 15 years. That honor went to Rocky Mountain College, and with triple medalist Pete Petry on the roster again, the Bears are a favorite this year.

Also returning is 2005 double gold medalist Rush Hawkins from the University of Massachusetts. Now a junior, Hawkins will team with his sister Eliza at UMass. "Eliza beats a good portion of the men's field on any given day," coach Justin Rouleau said.

Brown University was the women's USCSA runner-up in 2005, and Colby-Sawyer College finished third in both

men's and women's combined events. Both schools are again podium favorites. Rouleau also pointed to Plymouth State and Boston College as talented teams in his region.

In nordic, skiers from St. Olaf College, the University of Wyoming and Clarkson University have dominated the podium in recent years. Four-time gold medalist Linn Dale is back at St. Olaf for her junior year, and former nordic national champion Wyoming will be led by classic gold medalist Riley Hopeman. Double bronze medalist Sam Morse, Clarkson's top cross-country runner, will lead the men's cross-country ski team there as well.