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MISSOULA, MONTANA---Although his performers won't swing into action until mid-January, Montana swimming coach Bud Wallace is radiating optimism after two months of tank workouts in Missoula. "We've already had some outstanding performances in practice, and I think we have enough depth this season to win the Skyline swimming title," the mentor comments.

Bolstered by a record-shattering performance by freshman ace Ray Ellis, plus the news that veteran tanker Ivan Jacobsen is off the injury list, Wallace is prepping his swimmers for their Jan. 14 opening meet with the University of British Columbia in Missoula.

Last week, Ellis, an 18-year-old from Deer Lodge, unofficially shattered the NCAA freshman mark in the 100-yard butterfly with a time of 54.3 seconds. This is only 1.2 seconds off the national collegiate mark set last year by Olympic champion Mike Troy of Indiana.

Jacobsen, a senior from Oakland, Calif., has been bothered this fall by chronic ear trouble. Although Ivan won't be able to compete in his specialty, the butterfly, the Californian will switch to freestyle sprint events in meets this winter.

Other topnotch contenders are senior Wayne Veeneman, who holds a Skyline record in the breaststroke; veteran backstroker Doug James, sophomore distance ace Glenn Jones, freshman Gaylon Kipp, diver Bill Brubaker, and sprinter Ralph Dodge.

From a schedule standpoint, the Grizzly swimmers face one of their roughest campaigns in history. Top foes include Washington, Oregon, Oregon State, Utah, Washington State, Utah State and Idaho State. Skyline championships will be held March 2-4 in a new pool in Clearfield, Utah, just outside Salt Lake City.

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