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IMMEDIATELY

GRIZZLY WINTER SPORTS TEAMS IN ACTION
DURING BIG SKY CONFERENCE MEETS

MISSOULA---

University of Montana swimmers, wrestlers and skiers will be busy this weekend trying to bring Big Sky Conference laurels back to Missoula as league winter sports championships get under way in McCall and Pocatello, Idaho and in Ogden, Utah.

Of the three, the team with the best chance to bring home the bacon is Fred Stetson's swim squad, which has won the title for the last two years and is favored in competition at Ogden Thursday night, Friday and Saturday.

Sixteen "Aquatips" will be competing in the three-day event, indicating Grizzly depth which has been important in Montana's success at the last two meets. Coach Stetson is fairly optimistic about his team's chances of repeating as title holders.

"We have an excellent chance if we get good individual performances," Stetson said Wednesday. "Our depth is comparable to last year's, when we won firsts in three individual events and two relays.

"This year, if the kids swim up to their capabilities, we could come back with nine or 10 first places."

Conference records will be in danger again this year, and Montana freestyle distance ace Kurt von Tagen seems almost a cinch to break the 1650-yard freestyle mark. The freshman from Walnut Creek, Calif. has broken the record by as much as 43 seconds in dual meet competition this season. Stetson feels von Tagen will also have good shots at the 200 and 500-yard freestyle marks.

Swimming with von Tagen in the distance events will be Terry Stegner, Fountain Valley, Calif. junior, and Don Keffler, Missoula junior.
Competing in the other freestyle events will be Willard Anderson, Belvedere, Calif. senior; Wade Roloson, Denver, Colo. freshman, and Peter Matz, Rockford, Ill. freshman.

Grizzlies entering the backstroke races will be Dusty Bradley, Morango, Calif. sophomore, and Alan Bope, Morango freshman.

Montana swimmers in the butterfly events will be John Williamson, San Jose, Calif. senior and team captain, and Jerry Homstad, Miles City freshman.

Breaststroke entries will be Phil Foley, San Mateo, Calif. senior; Rick Stephens, Great Falls freshman, and Steve White, Billings freshman.

Diving will be Horst Fenske, Chicago, Ill. sophomore, and Dennis Dorr, Great Falls freshman.

Montana's entry in the individual medley will be Alan Turner, Sioux City, Iowa junior.

All Big Sky teams except Montana State University will compete in the swimming championships. Gonzaga appears to have the best chance to dump Montana.

Gene Davis will throw his wrestling team into Big Sky title competition this weekend with all matches Saturday in Pocatello. The Grizzly mentor will take a full 11-man squad to the meet.

Some individual Grizzlies, with the team sporting a 5-6 record on the season, have shown improvement from week to week against rugged competition. Davis feels if his charges really "put out," they could be dark horse contenders for the title. Last year's champ, Idaho State, and runnerup Montana State are co-favorites this year.

Wrestling for the Grizzlies, with weight classes first and season records in parentheses, will be: 115---Willie Clayton, Deerfield, Ill. freshman (1-4-1); 123---Dennis Labonty, Havre freshman (2-7); 130---Jeff Cunniff, Great Falls sophomore (6-2-1); 137---Roy Harrison, Kalispell junior (5-6); 145---Robin Hamilton, Kalispell sophomore.
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152--Bernie Olsen, Kalispell senior (4-5-2); 160--Tom Cooper, Missoula sophomore (8-1-2); 167--Doug Robbins, Great Falls sophomore (7-4); 177--Ron Mehrens, Butte sophomore (7-2-2); 191--Rod Lung, Sacramento, Calif. senior (5-2); Heavyweight--Bill Gilboe, Great Falls senior (10-1).

Harrison and Gilboe won titles in the 130 and 191-pound classes, respectively, last year.

In skiing, Coach Gary Nelson is taking seven competitors to McCall, where both the league championships and the NCAA Qualifying Meet will take place Saturday and Sunday.

Montana State is the heavy favorite to repeat as champ, and Nelson feels the Grizzlies should take second.

"If we could match them in the jumping event, we could give them a go for the title," he said Wednesday. "We're pretty close to them in the other three events."

The NCAA meet will involve teams from throughout the Northwest. Three four-way teams and the top five individuals in each event will qualify for the national competition at Steamboat Springs, Colo. March 21-23.

"We have an excellent chance of qualifying as a team," Nelson said. "But if we don't, we have some individuals who could make it."

Nelson said individually Rick Gibbon, a junior from Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, has the best chance to qualify in the slalom and downhill events.

"If a skier has some bad luck in the qualifying meet, but has shown well through the season, they'll still look at him," Nelson explained.

Competing for the Grizzlies will be Gibbon in the slalom, downhill and cross country; Tim Fredrickson, Spokane, Wash. sophomore, in the slalom and downhill; Rusty Lyons, Walla Walla, Wash. junior in all four events; David Lloyd, Claresholm, Alberta junior in all four; John Dobbins, Kennewick, Wash. sophomore, in all but downhill; Mick Hagestad, Kalispell freshman, in downhill and jumping, and Tim Potter, Washington, Conn. freshman in cross country only.

Swimmers and wrestlers, as well as skiers, can also qualify for NCAA competition with good performances this weekend.