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SIX OF MONTANA'S CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPS COMPETING THURSDAY IN USTFF MEET

MISSOULA---

Six members of Harley Lewis' University of Montana championship cross country team will spend Thanksgiving Day in Colorado competing in the United States Track and Field Federation's national cross country championships in Ft. Collins, home of Colorado State University.

Making the trip with Lewis will be Fred Friesz, Big Sky Conference individual winner, Wade Jacobsen, who finished second, Ray Velez, fourth, Steve Linse, 10th, Ray Ballew, 12th, and Mick Harrington, 14th. The only one not making the trip is Duane Spethman, who finished 16th in the Big Sky meet.

The USTFF event will cover six miles, so the Grizzly harriers have found it necessary to train a little harder than usual since the conference championships.

"We've been used to no more than four miles all year," Lewis said, "so the kids have been running harder and longer than before to get prepared for the six miles."

What are the Grizzlies' chances in the meet?

"It's hard to say, because we have no idea what other teams are going to compete," Lewis said. "In the past, from 200 to 400 runners have competed.

"I do think Friesz, Jacobsen and Velez have as good a chance as anyone to finish in the top 15 down there," he continued. "Those three would complement any cross country team."

The USTFF competition will be the final outing for the champion Grizzly runners, and the entire group, except Friesz, will be back to run in cross country again next year.