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# NEWS

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FOR FRIDAY P.M. RELEASE

### DEFENDING BIG SKY CROSS COUNTRY CHAMPS OPEN SEASON AT BILLINGS SATURDAY

MISSOULA---

University of Montana cross country runners, defending champions in the Big Sky Conference, open 1968 competition Saturday at Billings in a non-conference triangular meet hosted by Eastern Montana College.

Competing against UM and Eastern Montana in the  $3\frac{1}{4}$ -mile event will be Kearney State College of Kearney, Neb.

Grizzly Coach Harley Lewis will pick a seven-man squad from 10 hopefuls who have been training on their own during the summer. The runners returned to school early this week.

Fred Friesz of Billings, who won individual honors in last fall's Big Sky championship meet in Missoula, was the only man lost through graduation. Top returnees are sophomore Wade Jacobsen of Simms, who finished second to Friesz last year, and junior Ray Velez of San Bernadino, Calif.

"Wade and Ray are almost certain to compete Saturday, as they returned in by far the best condition," Lewis said.

The Grizzly mentor said his other five competitors will be chosen from sophomore Steve Linse, Snohomish, Wash.; sophomore Ray Ballew, Sunburst; senior Mick Harrington, Missoula; freshman Howard Johnson, Anaconda; freshman Pat Duncan, Grants Pass, Ore.; freshman Bob Conway, Great Falls; freshman Tim O'Hare, Billings, and freshman Laurie Dunlap, Missoula.

"As of Wednesday, it looks like Johnson will be our third best," Lewis said. "Linse has a stone bruise on his left foot, and he is a doubtful performer this week."

Lewis added that the Billings meet would be of an "experimental" nature to see how much conditioning work needs to be done during the next week.