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University of Montana–Missoula. Office of University Relations, "Montana favored in cross country" (1970). *University of Montana News Releases, 1928, 1956-present*. 6385.
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IMMEDIATE RELEASE
MISSOULA--

Defending Big Sky cross country champion Montana is a slight favorite to retain the title in 1970.

Coach Harley Lewis will leave Friday for Bozeman and the conference cross country finals. Lewis will take seven men to run the five mile Valley View Country Club.

Montana took one-two-three in the league finals in Moscow last November with Wade Jacobsen capturing the individual title for the second straight year. Ray Velez took second and George Cook third.

Lewis has his entire team with the exception of Velez returning this season plus two Spokane freshmen, Wes Priestly and Mark Ryun.

The Montana team has defeated its Big Sky competition, namely Idaho State, in a dual meet 25-30 and has been defeated only by the Vancouver Olympic Club and Washington State.

Lewis, who has guided two Montana cross country teams (1967 and 1969) to titles in his five-year coaching span, said Jacobsen will have a tough time defending his crown. Northern Arizona's Richard Sliney, a sophomore from England, is undefeated and has posted the best times in the Big Sky this year.

The Grizzlies have the team depth to counter Sliney's high placing and should only have to worry about Idaho State for the title. Idaho State with Nelson Karagu, Mike Isola, Tony Rodriguez and other top contestants will battle Montana for the title.

Last weekend in the Montana-Montana State dual, Bob Malkemes threw a curb into things. His impressive win added to Montana's strength.

Lewis plans to run Jacobsen, Cook, Priestly, Malkemes, Boyd Collins, Tim O'Hare, and Mark Ryun Saturday.