

denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

ncaa skiing championships

CU supplants DU as ski champion

By Nathan Burgess
Special to The Denver Post

Posted: 03/13/2011 01:00:00 AM MST

STOWE, Vt. — The University of Colorado ski team ended a three-year run for the University of Denver on Saturday, dominating the 58th NCAA skiing championships.

"This was nice for us," CU coach Richard Rokos said. "It was a good championship. Lots of things happened during the year and for us to win to put a lid on it this way — it was something we were fighting and hoping for all year long."

It was a savored victory for a team beset by tragedy and trials this season. The team raced in memory of Spencer Nelson, a sophomore skier who was killed hiking near Aspen in August.

"We've kept him in our minds all season," Rokos said heading into the competition.

A number of injuries dogged the team, but the season has come "full circle," Rokos said.

The Buffs had a strong showing during the four-day championships, with team wins in women's

giant slalom and nordic 5K free technique, and in men's slalom and nordic 20K classic.

The win is Colorado's 17th national championship, and the first since 2006. Rokos said he was happy to keep the title in the state.

From Day One, the talking point of the competition was the weather. A massive storm Monday greeted competitors with 2 feet of snow, altering travel plans and forcing crews to work overtime clearing the race courses. The snow was followed by mild, rainy weather that forced rescheduling of the men's and women's giant slalom.

"It's typical Vermont weather and you can't complain about it," Rokos said. "We were expecting it, actually."

CU (831 points) beat out Utah (750.5) and Dartmouth (643) to take the team title.

Denver finished fifth (592), after multiple injuries forced coach Andy LeRoy to field a second-string team. Still, a team win in women's slalom Saturday gave the Pioneers something to take home. Strong showings in the nordic races in rainy conditions also kept spirits up.

"That feels good for the week," LeRoy said. "We can go back and believe all we're doing is working and just go ahead with the next crop of youngsters and hope for a better next year."

LeRoy also was happy the title will stay in Colorado.

Advertisement



SAVE up to **64%**
Plus, get
3 FREE Gifts



Special Code: 45069ZWN

To Order: www.OmahaSteaks.com/print71 or call 1-877-605-0496

Print Powered By FormatDynamics™

denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

"Congratulations to (the Buffaloes), they were unflappable this week," he said. "They deserve this win. I couldn't be more excited that if we didn't do it they were able to clearly dominate like they did."

The story of Saturday for DU was freshman Sterling Grant's win in the women's slalom. Grant, who was on the U.S. Ski Team, dominated the competition, with teammate Lindsay Cone coming in second.

Grant "has been the best skier all year," LeRoy said, especially since she started the second run at the bottom of the start list.

"In those conditions, she had to scratch and claw her way to make it happen," LeRoy said.

Advertisement

A horizontal banner advertisement for ProFlowers. On the left, there is a bouquet of yellow and orange flowers in a glass vase. In the center, the text reads "Send flowers for any occasion" in a serif font, followed by "Bouquets \$19.99 from \$19.99 +s/h" in a large, bold, serif font. Below this, the ProFlowers logo is displayed. On the right, there is a bouquet of pink and red roses. Below the roses, the text says "Order ONLY at proflowers.com/happy or call 1-877-888-0688".

Send flowers for any occasion

Bouquets \$19.99
from \$19.99^{+s/h}

ProFlowers

Order ONLY at
proflowers.com/happy
or call 1-877-888-0688

Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™

CU Buffs claim 18th NCAA skiing title

Camera staff report
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 03/12/2011 06:59:27 PM MST

STOWE, Vt. -- The University of Colorado ski team had one goal at the beginning of the season. On Saturday that mission was accomplished.

The Buffs won the NCAA Championships with a wire-to-wire victory. In doing so, the Buffs honored Spencer Nelson, their 20-year-old teammate who died in a hiking accident on Aug. 15.

"It was our goal to do this for Spencer from the beginning, and we were consistently accomplishing that goal throughout the season," CU coach Richard Rokos said. "Every single run, every single meet, everybody kept it in their minds. In the end, we accomplished it and it was the biggest satisfaction to follow through. It was a high goal from the start to want to do this for him and his family."

As a team, the Buffs earned 831 points for the title. Utah was second with 750.5 points and Dartmouth (643) was third. New Mexico (632) and Denver (592) rounded out the top five.

Heading into Saturday's slalom races, the Buffs held an 84.5-point lead.

Senior Gabriel Rivas finished second in the men's race with a two-run time of 1 minute, 40.60 seconds. Vermont's Tim Kelley won the race in 1:39.42. CU's Max Lamb was 10th (1:44.26).

In the women's race, sophomore Erika Ghent turned in the top performance for the Buffs. She finished 10th in 1:58.09 as the Buffs took few risks with a sizable overall lead.

"All of our approaches going into today were to be pretty conservative and make sure we got to the bottom," Ghent said. "We knew we needed to be solid and fast, but the most important thing was to get to the bottom intact."

Denver's Sterling Grant won the women's slalom in 1:54.27.

Two Buffs set the stage for the team victory by winning individual Nordic titles Friday. CU juniors Eliska Hajkova (women's 15K classical) and Reid Pletcher (men's 20K classical) were the lone Buffs to earn individual NCAA titles this year. Overall, 83 Buffs had completed the individual feat.

As a team, this is CU's 18th national title in skiing and Rokos' sixth as head coach. Rokos is now one behind Bill Marolt, who coached the ski team to seven consecutive titles from 1972-78.

"I told Bill that I wouldn't quit until I have at least seven titles, now I am right on his heels," Rokos joked about the man who hired him to lead the Buffs in 1990. "It's been a good challenge."

NCAA Championships

Team Scores -- 1. Colorado 831; 2. Utah 750.5; 3. Dartmouth 643; 4. New Mexico 632; 5. Denver 592; 6. Vermont 575.5; 7. Alaska-Anchorage 488.5; 8. New Hampshire 344; 9. Middlebury 246.5; 10. Montana State 230; 11. Bates 196; 12. Northern Michigan 185; 13. Alaska-Fairbanks 157; 15. Williams 149; 15. Colby 121; 16. St. Lawrence 95; 17. Harvard 58; 18. Michigan Tech 45; 19. Wisconsin-Green Bay 31; 20. Maine-Presque Isle 27; 21. Gustavus Adolphus 10.

Men's Slalom (27 finishers) -- 1. Tim Kelley, UVM, 1:39.42; 2. Gabriel Rivas, CU, 1:40.60; 3. Zach Clayton, UNH, 1:41.59; 4. Trevor Leafe, Dart., 1:41.90; 5. Torjus Krogdahl, Utah, 1:42.70; 6. Andrew McNealus, Midd., 1:43.49; 7. Armin Triendl, UNM, 1:44.02; 8. Sam Coffey, UNH, 1:44.16; 9. Andreas Kilde, DU, 1:44.19; 10. Max Lamb, CU, 1:44.26. **Other CU Finisher:** 20. Andreas Haug, 1:52.51.


Women's Slalom (28 finishers) -- 1. Sterling Grant, DU, 1:54.27; 2. Lindsay Cone, DU, 1:55.25; 3. Ashley Durham, SLU,

1:55.61; 4. Kate Ryley, UVM, 1:55.92; 5. Tii-Maria Romar, Utah, 1:56.46; 6. Eva Huckova, UNM, 1:57.02; 7. Anne Brusletto, UNM, 1:57.06; 8. Lyndee Janowiak, UVM, 1:57.10; 9. Anna Kocken, Utah, 1:57.96; 10. Erika Ghent, CU, 1:58.09. **Other CU Finishers:** 11. Carolina Nordh, 1:58.13; 12. Sara Hjertman, 1:58.16.

[Close Window](#)[Send To Printer](#)

Education
is a *Journey*

LEARN MORE →

**WESTERN
GOVERNORS
UNIVERSITY**

[HOME](#) [JOIN](#) [LOG IN](#) [ADVERTISE](#)



[Aspen Weather](#)



38.0F 3.3C

[NEWS](#) [OUTDOORS](#) [LODGING](#) [DINING](#) [PEOPLE](#)

Search Site

CU ski team wins title in memory of Spencer Nelson

By [Troy Hooper](#)

Real Aspen – March 12, 2011

Peter Nelson watched the CU ski team nab its 18th title in Stowe, Vt., on Saturday.



CU head coach Richard Rokos (left) holds the NCAA championship trophy with Peter Nelson.
Curtis Snyder/University of Colorado

The University of Colorado's crown was dedicated to his 20-year-old son, Spencer, who died in a [tragic fall](#) while hiking the Maroon Bells near Aspen late last summer. Spencer Nelson was a sophomore on the team whose talent, dedication and spirit have not been forgotten.

"It was our goal to do this for Spencer from the beginning, and we were consistently accomplishing that goal throughout the season," CU head coach Richard Rokos said. "Every single run, every single meet, everybody kept it in their minds. In the end, we accomplished it and it was the biggest satisfaction to follow through. It was a high goal from the start to want to do this for him and his family."

The golden Buffaloes supplanted the University of Denver, which has won the last three titles in the sport. Colorado defeated runner-up University of Utah by 80.5 points, the fifth widest margin of victory in NCAA ski history.



CU coach: This one's for Spencer.

The ski team brought the first NCAA title to Boulder in 1959 under the direction of then-coach Bob Beattie, who lives in Woody Creek.

"This is CU's sixth title in skiing since the sport went coed in 1983, all under Rokos, as the Buffaloes previously won titles in 1991, 1995, 1998, 1999 and 2006; Colorado had won 11 NCAA men's and one AIAW women's titles before the genders merged. Overall, it is the school's 24th national championship, including three in men's cross country (2001, 2004, 2006), two in women's cross country (2000, 2004) and one in football (1990)," according to David Plati, the University of Colorado's associate athletic director.

The six national titles under Rokos leaves the coach one behind Bill Marolt, who coached the ski team to seven consecutive championships from 1972-78. Marolt hired Rokos in 1990.

"In my career personally, this is the most outstanding of my 21 years," Rokos told the university's website CUBuffs.com. "Spencer's death put a cover on the season, we all felt awful and lots of people realized, it moved their spiritual thinking to a different level, this was an unbelievable experience for everybody. We [dedicated the season](#) to Spencer and we achieved that goal. So it's a lesson that if you work hard, you can achieve those goals."



0 Comments on "CU ski team wins title in memory of Spencer Nelson"

Be the first to comment below.

COMMENT

Please log in to comment

Email Address:

Password:

[Create a user account to comment](#)

Comment Information

Real Aspen encourages you to post comments on our articles and blogs. Logged in email is required for monitoring purposes. Your email will not be published and will not be distributed to any third-party. Abusive, obscene, profane, threatening, libelous or defamatory comments are prohibited. By posting a comment, you agree to this policy and our [terms of use](#). To report an abusive posting, please [contact us](#).

To make a comment, please log in or [create an account](#). This helps us prevent spam and other malicious attacks.

[COMMUNITY CONTENT](#)

Burlington FreePress.com

Vermont's Kelley wins as Colorado claims title

Written by

Adam White
Free Press Correspondent

6:16 PM, Mar. 12, 2011]

STOWE — Triumph over adversity was the theme as the 58th annual NCAA Skiing Championships wrapped up at Stowe Mountain Resort on Saturday.

University of Vermont freshman Tim Kelley finally broke through with the Catamounts' first victory of the competition in the men's slalom and the University of Colorado Buffaloes captured their first team crown since 2006 in a season dedicated to a fallen teammate.

"It's been a hell of a season for us, and for it to end like this is just beyond words," said Katie Heartman, a senior captain for the Buffaloes who tore her ACL at the World University Games in Turkey and was forced to watch the NCAAs on crutches. Heartman was also a roommate of Spencer Nelson, a rising star on the Colorado ski team who was killed in a hiking accident in August.

"Spencer always said, 'No struggle, no progress,' and we made that our team motto for this year," Heartman said. "He's been an inspiration to us all year, and with everything we had to overcome, it definitely

shows the character of the kids on this team."

"I wish Spencer could be here to be a part of this, and really, he is," said Peter Nelson, the late skier's father. "These kids never lost their focus from the time the season began; they skied well all year, and it's great to see them win."

Colorado finished with 831 team points, well ahead of Utah (750), Dartmouth (643), New Mexico (632) and Denver (592). UVM, which entered the meet ranked No. 1 in the country, placed sixth with 575.5 points.

UVM's luck turns

After experiencing a string of bad breaks that left them out of the team race heading into the final day of competition, the Vermont Catamounts finally got the breakthrough performance they had been waiting for from Kelley. The Starksboro resident and U.S. Ski Team member turned in the third-fastest time of the first run

Advertisement



USA TODAY
AutoPilot 

The new travel app for iPhone® and iPod touch®

Presented by: 

SEE HOW IT WORKS »

Print Powered By  **FormatDynamics™**

Burlington FreePress.com

(48.39 seconds) down the Spruce Peak course and then raised the stakes with the fastest time of the second run (51.03) to claim his first national title.

"This is my home hill, so I'm not afraid to push it here," Kelley said. "Coming across the finish line in first, in front of the home crowd, was one of the best feelings of my skiing career."

UVM assistant coach Johnny Davidson said that Kelley's championship provided a measure of redemption for the Catamounts and the skier himself.

"It's been a tough week, but we've been saying all along that we've got the best Alpine team in the country — and now, we finally got some results to back that up," Davidson said. "It's been a real process for Tim; he had hip and back surgery over the summer, and he was so limited in his dry-land training that he basically had to ski himself back into shape."

Kelley's total time of 1:39.42 was comfortably beat out Gabriel Rivas of Colorado, the 2009 NCAA champ in the slalom. Rivas' two-run performance (1:40.60) came in spite of course conditions that he described as "really tricky."

"You really had to keep your eyes wide open and look ahead of you at what's coming," Rivas said. "My goal was just to make it down without too many mistakes; I was fortunate to end up on the podium."

Zach Clayton of New Hampshire took third place with a time of 1:41.59, just ahead of

Dartmouth's Trevor Leafe (1:41.90).

Vermont looked destined for more disappointment early in the event. Sophomore Kevin Drury — the four-place finisher in Wednesday's giant slalom — suffered a fall and a missed gate in his first run before crashing again near the bottom and being disqualified.

"It was a total bummer," Drury said. "The course was really inconsistent, very hard to predict from turn to turn."

Fellow Catamount Jonathan Nordbotten also fell victim to the conditions. After turning in the fastest time in the event's first run (47.42), the freshman from Norway skied off course midway through the second and was disqualified.

A conservative clinch

With their team holding a 99.5-point lead heading into the competition's final event

Advertisement

USA TODAY
AutoPilot

The new travel app for iPhone® and iPod touch®

Presented by:

SEE HOW IT WORKS »

Print Powered By FormatDynamics™

Burlington FreePress.com

— the women's slalom — Colorado took a conservative approach so as not to open the door for Utah. Denver, the team champion the previous three years, capitalized with Sterling Grant and Lindsay Cone of Killington sweeping the top two spots.

Grant flashed the most aggressive skiing of the women's competition — particularly through the lower gates — and said afterward that the variable conditions had no impact on her strategy.

"You just had to charge and battle the whole way down," said Grant, who won with a total time was 1:54.27. "You can't hold a nything back because you don't want to have any regrets once you cross the line."

Grant bumped Killington native Cone (1:55.25) from the top spot by a fraction of a second. Ashley Kate Durham of St. Lawrence took third in 1:55.61, just edging Vermont's Kate Ryley (fourth, 1:55.92).

Ryley expressed dismay in the condition of the course, saying afterward that "this wasn't Alpine skiing."

"This was definitely our most challenging race of the year, and it's too bad it had to come in the NCAA finals," Ryley said. "It was a fight the entire way down, just to finish."

Colorado's Erika Ghent, Carolina Nordh and Sara Hjertman finished 10th, 11th and 12th to put the finishing touches on the Buffaloes' national title, their sixth since the sport went co-ed in 1983. Colorado finished second behind Denver in each of

the previous three years.

College sports blog

For more coverage on University of Vermont and college sports, check out the [Free Press' On Campus blog](#).

Advertisement

The advertisement features the USA TODAY logo at the top left, followed by the word "AutoPilot" in a large, bold, black font. To the right of the text is a blue airplane icon. Below the title, a smartphone screen displays the app's interface, showing a "USA TODAY Meeting" for September 21, 2009, with a list of items including "A6 BNA to IAD Landed", "73° Washington (IAD) Partly Cloudy", and a link to "View a Flickr gallery of Washington". To the right of the phone, the text reads "The new travel app for iPhone® and iPod touch®". Below this, it says "Presented by: Hampton" with the Hampton logo. At the bottom right, a blue button with white text says "SEE HOW IT WORKS »".

Print Powered By FormatDynamics™