



**"A FAIR SHOWING" is what Nova Scotia cross-country skiing coach Bryan Scallion is predicting for his team that will represent the province at the 1979 Canada Winter Games in Brandon, Man. Feb. 12-24. Members of the team are, from left to right, Bill Donner, Dartmouth; Ron Mitchell, Dartmouth; Pierre Roy, Dartmouth; Jullian Bidwell, Wallace; Angela Ghiz, Halifax; Susan Hoyle, Dartmouth; Susan Folkins, Debert; and manager Dianne Powell, Wentworth. Missing from the picture are coach Bryan Scallion of Wentworth and David Wheeler of Truro.**



# Lack of snow hindering Nova Scotia ski team's preparations

(Editor's note:  
12th of a series)

By BOB ORR  
Staff Reporter

Training has virtually ground to a halt for the Nova Scotia cross-country ski team that will represent the province in the 1979 Canada Winter Games in Brandon, Man. Feb. 12-24.

The lack of snow cut the number of trial runs for choosing the team from five to two, forcing the coaching team to rate last year's performance and participation in summer training programs in making the final selections from an original field of 30 skiers.

Since choosing the team, the coaches have had the team for on snow training only over the Christmas holiday.

"The weather has been a vital factor," said team manager Dianne Scallion.

"We had excellent snow conditions over Christmas and all the athletes were getting a lot of good on snow training and technique training. But since Jan. 1 we have virtually been without snow, and so it has been very hard for them to train.

"What they have had to do is revert to dry land training, which is not the same. They can get a good workout, but it is not like being on skis."

But Scallion, whose husband

Brian, along with Brian Cochran of Dartmouth and Denis Kay and Colin Stewart of Halifax, form the coaching team, feels a few races can get the team back on track.

"We have two or three more races scheduled before we actually go, and if we can get them all in, we should be okay," she said.

Forming the men's team are David Wheeler of Truro, and Pierre Roy, Bill Donner and Ron Mitchell, Dartmouth, while the women's team consists of Gillian Didwell, Wallace; Angela Ghiz, Halifax; Susan Hoyle, Dartmouth; and Susan Folkins, Debert.

All four members compete in the 10 and 15 kilometre individual races, with three taking part in a relay in which each team member covers 7.5 kilometres.

During the 1975 Games in Lethbridge, Alta. the men's team finished a respectable fourth, while the women's team finished seventh. The men's team had a shot at a bronze medal when the third man on their relay team became ill and had to be replaced by the slower fourth man.

Pacing the men's finish were current national team members Gary Hartling and Brian Scallion, who finished sixth and

eighth respectively at the 1975 Games.

Scallion said a strange course should not provide any difficulty for the team.

"They have two days to go over it," she explained. "All the other athletes, except the ones from Manitoba, will face the same conditions."

Will that make Manitoba the team to beat?

"Possibly," admits Scallion, "but I think the powerhouses are going to be Quebec and Ontario."

The growth of cross-country skiing in Nova Scotia has helped the skill level of the sport, she said.

"Over the past two or three years, the number of competitors is steadily increasing," said Scallion, president of the Nova Scotia Cross-Country Skiing Association. "The more people you get involved, the more people tend to stay involved. With people who have been competing for a year or two, naturally their skill develops."

But, a new Games restriction, limiting the age of competitors to 25-and-under, has had a detrimental effect.

"The team members, particularly the men, that we had in 1975 had been skiing for a longer time than the athletes we have on this team," said Scallion.