

CMU one of first to launch cross-county snowboard racing team

By FROM COLORADO MESA UNIVERSITY

NOTE: This story is an April Fool's prank.

In an unprecedented decision, Colorado Mesa University has decided to make the leap into collegiate cross-county snowboard racing.

The sport will test these young athletes and push them to physical extremes like no other sport.

The university made the announcement on Tuesday, April 1.

"Colorado Mesa University is proud to announce the launch of its newest competitive outdoor team: CMU Cross Country Snowboarding," a news release from the university said today.

The unique venture may seem foolhardy for athletes to try since it's an awkward disciple to master, but it puts CMU on the cutting edge of outdoors sports as possibly the first school in the nation to offer the sport to its student-athletes. "The program marks the first of its kind in collegiate athletics, blending the endurance and technically-challenging spirit of cross country skiing with the free-ride edge of snowboarding,"

the April 1 news release said.

Head coach Martin Wiesiolek, who also coaches the CMU cross country ski team, is hoping athletes will embrace the unique blend of the physical demands of the sport with the fun of the outdoors.

But before fools rush into this venture, they should realize that it's a highly unique sport and potential athletes should not be fooled that it will be easy.

"This is something totally new — but it's built on familiar ground," said Wiesiolek, who is also credited as the founder of the cross country snowboard team. "Our athletes already love moving through winter terrain with purpose and flow. Cross country snowboarding is about taking that same energy and creativity to snowboards, and it's a blast."

As the first university in the world to offer cross country snowboarding, like skiing through fresh powder, CMU is breaking new ground in what they hope will become a tradition rooted in innovation, grit and outdoor adventure.

"We've always been

about innovation," Wiesiolek said. "The best teams don't just adapt to the sport — they redefine it."

"Cross country snowboarding is the natural next step. It takes the endurance, technique, and sheer grit of cross country skiing and combines it with the nearly impossible feat of snowboarding across flat terrain."

The cross-training opportunities with the cross country ski team will offer similarities but will also come with some challenges.

But the cross country snowboard team will have a similar training model to the CMU cross country ski team, with structured endurance sessions, strength training, and technical development.

The hope is that having the same coach in both disciplines will help develop athletes as they take on this new sport.

"We're keeping our focus on quality movement, full-body coordination, and respect for the flat trails," Wiesiolek said. "Just with a sideways stance."

For CMU officials the excitement surrounding the formation of a cross country snowboard team



COURTESY PHOTO

Two Colorado Mesa University members of the newly formed cross country snowboarding team on the Grand Mesa.

and putting CMU on the cutting edge of collegiate outdoor sports is tremendous.

"It's like being there when snowboarding was invented — or when someone first put peanut butter and jelly together," said Robin Brown, CMU's vice president of development.

She added that it truly will put CMU in the headlines for years to

come, calling it "bold, unexpected and totally game-changing."

The cross country snowboard team will be open to CMU students and will train alongside the cross country ski team on Grand Mesa, the April 1 news release said.

One huge factor for the new team is the fact that the outdoor mecca of the Grand Mesa is no fool's paradise when it comes to

cross country skiing and snowboarding.

Being the first team of its kind, CMU will look for set the standard for the sport as it evolves and other colleges and universities realize they need to be on board, both literally and figuratively, or be left behind.

"We're not waiting around for a playbook," Wiesiolek said. "We're writing it."