

The Burlington Free Press

Friday, February 24, 2006 •••

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50 cents

Middlebury skier critically injured

Brush recovering from broken back

By Leslie Wright
Free Press Staff Writer

A Middlebury College student from Charlotte who suffered spinal cord injuries in a ski racing accident Saturday was listed in stable condition Thursday and was described as inspiring her fellow ski team members

from her hospital bed with her positive attitude.

Kelly Brush, 19, a sophomore, fell during the giant slalom race at the Williams College winter carnival at Jiminy Peak ski area in Hancock, Mass. Brush missed a gate and slid off the race course, traveling about 100 feet before her back slammed into a chairlift tower, according to



Kelly Brush

information released by the college.

She was taken by ambulance to Berkshire Medical Center in Pittsfield, Mass., where she underwent surgery. She was listed in stable condition Thursday afternoon.

"The thoughts and prayers of her teammates and coaches and all the members of the Middlebury College

community are with Kelly and her family," said Russ Reilly, director of athletics, in a prepared statement.

A Web site posted Thursday by a family friend said the surgery Saturday night lasted 10 hours, and listed Brush's injuries as a punctured lung and spinal fracture. John Beal, a senior at St. Lawrence University in Canton, N.Y., who created the

See **SKIER**, 11A

SKIER: Middlebury racer injured

Continued from Page 1A

Web site, said he posted information he was given by Kelly's mother, Mary Brush.

"She is alert, visiting and moving her upper body," the site said. "Her spinal column was not severed but had to be realigned during the surgery. She currently has use of her arms and feeling presently at the chest level and above. So now it is just a matter of waiting and praying to see what the extent of her recovery will be and where she will rehab."

Beal described Brush as spunky, fun and always smiling.

"She's totally alert, totally there. She's Kelly," said Forest Carey, alpine head coach, in a prepared statement.

Brush Web site

Here is a Web site to get information about Kelly Brush's condition or to send her a message:

■ www.caringbridge.org
click on "visit" and enter her name in the caring-bridge site box

Brush remained hospitalized on the eve of this weekend's Middlebury College winter carnival, which serves as the Eastern Intercollegiate Ski Association Championships.

Crews worked all day at the Middlebury College Snow Bowl preparing for races today and Saturday. Snow Bowl General Manager Peter Mackey described

the team's mood as upbeat going into the carnival weekend. Many of the college team members raced Sunday at the Snow Bowl.

"That was an expression of support that the Brushes thought was appropriate, that the team would carry on," Mackey said. "The kids have been visiting her and have come away very positive about her attitude and spirits. It's got to be motivation for them."

Brush's sister Lindsay, a junior at Middlebury, is also on the Middlebury team. Her father, Charlie, skied for Middlebury and coached skiing and football at the college.

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