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The Boston Globe

Middlebury skier badly injured

February 24, 2006

MIDDLEBURY, Vt. --Members of the Middlebury College ski team are rooting for a teammate from Charlotte who suffered spinal cord injuries during a ski racing event in Massachusetts last weekend.

"She is alert, visiting and moving her upper body," said a Web site set up by a friend of Kelly Brush's family. "Her spinal cord was not severed, but had to be realigned during surgery," the site set up by John Beal said of the 19-year-old sophomore.

"She currently has use of her arms and feeling presently at the chest level and above," it added. "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 said he posted information he was given by the skier's mother, Mary Brush.

Brush fell during a giant slalom race at the Williams College winter carnival at Jiminy Peak ski area in Hancock, Mass. Officials said she slid about 100 feet off the course and back-first into the base of a chair lift tower.

She underwent 10 hours of surgery after being taken by ambulance to Berkshire Medical Center in Pittsfield, Mass., where she was listed in stable condition Thursday.

Russ Reilly, Middlebury's director of athletics, said in a prepared statement, "The thoughts and prayers of her teammates and coaches and all the members of the Middlebury College community are with Kelly and her family."

Middlebury is holding its own winter carnival at the Middlebury College Snow Bowl, with races Friday and Saturday. Peter Mackey, general manager of the Snow Bowl, said Brush's family wanted the team to carry on.

"The kids have been visiting her and have come away very positive about her attitude and spirits," Mackey said. "It's got to be motivation for them."

Charlie Brush, Kelly's father, skied at Middlebury and coached at the college. Kelly's sister, Lindsay, a junior at the school, also is on the ski team.

Information from: The Burlington Free Press, <http://www.burlingtonfreepress.com> ■