Kikkan Randall is Ready for Olympics

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Jay Barrett/KMXT

The leader of the U.S. Olympic Cross-Country Ski Team is getting ready for the Winter Olympic Games to be held in Vancouver, but Anchorage's Kikkan Randall took a few minutes to call into KMXT's Jock of the Rock on Saturday to discuss her journey to becoming America's best skier.

Though she is the niece of two former U.S. Olympians, she said she got the idea of competing in the Olympics when she was just a small child:

-- (Kikkan 1 34 sec "When I was five years old ... a full time pursuit.")

The U.S. doesn't have as long a tradition of cross-country skiing as European countries, but Randall says that's been changing:

-- (Kikkan 2 36 sec "The sport of cross-country ... that's for sure.")

Randall will be competing in a wide variety of events, from sprints of less than a mile to endurance races of nearly 20 miles.

-- (Kikkan 3 53 sec "I'm coming in as the top-ranked ... to do the 30 kilometer.")

This will be the third Olympic Games for Randall, who first competed in 2002 as a teenager.

Randall was born in Salt Lake City, but grew up in Alaska, attending Anchorage's East High School, where she won 10 state championship titles in running. As a sophomore, she clocked the second-fastest cross country running time ever at the Fort Abercrombie course, right behind the all-time record held by Kodiak's Kristy Klinnert.

-- (Kikkan 4 26 sec "You know, I have to say that ... fun course to race.")

Randall set
a personal best in a 10-kilometer skate-skiing race this winter in Bietstolen, (beet stolen) Norway. And though she only placed 21st, it was her best finish ever in a World Cup distance race. The Winter Olympics begin on February 12th, in Vancouver, British Columbia. Cross Country skiing begins on February 15th.

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