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# Cross-country skiing satisfies the competitive spirit as well as recreational athletes

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The summer sports season is slowly but surely over. But don't panic, you certainly don't need to become a couch potato. There is plenty of choice in wintertime as well. One such option is joining the cross-country skiing club, part of the Humanita Praha University Sports Club. Coach Eva Šeflová told us more.

Humanita Praha is a sports club working under the umbrella of the Charles University Faculty of Arts. But that doesn't mean it is open only to its students. "Everyone who is interested in sports can join us," says Eva Šeflová. There are various levels of performance. You can satisfy your competitive spirit in races, but recreational athletes, for whom sport is more of a social activity, can enjoy themselves in a friendly atmosphere, too.

## Cross-country skiing develops the moral and volitional aspects of character

Cross-country skiing offers outdoor exercise, away from crowds. "Among its advantages are different types of activities, be it racing, ski-orienteeering or touring in maintained trails or in open terrain in unknown landscape," Eva Šeflová says. Success does not only mean strength, endurance and technique, as it may sometimes seem when we watch Lukáš Bauer or Milan Koukal on television. Apart from physical condition, cross-country skiing develops the moral and volitional aspects of character. "Even though it is an individual sport, it brings people together. Everyone has a chance to get to know each other better; people help and support each other. Then even people from different age groups can compete with one another," the coach says.

The popularity of university sports clubs is generally declining. Eva Šeflová sees the reasons in widespread individualism and a pressure to succeed at all costs. Moreover, students have many other opportunities of self-fulfilment, be it studying abroad or travelling. Sport and exercise are neglected, especially now that only top level sport is supported. "But if students join the university sports clubs, they really like the atmosphere and relaxed attitude which however does not lack competitiveness and aiming for the best performance possible, with regard to each person's capabilities, of course. They very often stay in the clubs even after graduation as academic or alumni members," the coach says.



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## **Humanita takes part in university competition, Academic and Prague Championships**

The intensity of training depends on you and your sporting goals. Training camps are held when the first snow falls; in December and during the Christmas holidays there is a training camp focused on technique. During the year, training is more individual, there are various one-day or weekend events or races in complementary sports, such as cross-country running, orienteering, mountain bike orienteering, climbing, combined track and field events, and swimming. Every summer there is a training camp in Albeř.

Humanita takes part in the university competition, the Academic as well as Prague Championships. If there are members of the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> performance levels in the club, they can register and take part in national competitions. Members also participate in cross-country skiing events such as Jizerská padesátka, Šumavský maraton, Orlický maraton, Karlův běh, Jilemnická padesátka or Krkonošská sedmdesátka. Sometimes they travel abroad, for example to the traditional Vasaloppet. "Last year we won the university competition, so it would be nice if we defended the first place or secured a medal position," Eva Šeflová sums up her goals for this coming season.

You can find more information about the club at:

[www.beh.vskhumanita.cz](http://www.beh.vskhumanita.cz)