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# Kohrs outdistances rare disease

By PAT EDMONDSON  
Manfred Kohrs inherited a spiritual disease at an early age; the



MANFRED KOHRS

desire to run long distances. A physical disease, however, later threatened his racing career.

Extensive research has been conducted on bilharziasis, or schistosomiasis, a tropical disease predominate in South Africa, South America, the Middle East, the Orient and the Caribbean Islands. The disease originates from stagnant water and weakens the affected individual much in the same manner as mononucleosis. The symptoms, too, are similar to mono; general debilitation.

Bilharziasis is an infection in which adult worms live in the blood of humans. The worm's life cycle depends on one phase of its life being spent in a snail exposed to bilharziasis, and the other part spend in man, pets, farm animals or rodents.

Manfred Kohrs is a distance runner and captain of the Texas A&M track team. He is a resident of Natal, a small, predominately English state in South Africa. He talked of his association with bilharziasis in a recent interview.

"I spent a lot of time around lakes when I was young," he said. "In fact, there is a tropical river that runs right through our farm. The thing is, it only starts to affect you when your body physically matures, at about the age of 21 or 22. I had it in my subconscious mind that one day it (bilharziasis) might affect me."

Before he began running competitively, Kohrs remembered a South African classmate who earned respect and national recognition in distance running; it gave Kohrs the incentive to do the same. He trained hard and competed against the top distance runners in South Africa in his age division. On two occasions, he placed third in the national championships.

Like other South African distance runners, Kohrs ventured to the United States and came to Texas A&M on a track scholarship. He fared well his first season, placing sixth in the mile at the outdoor conference meet, and seventh at the league's cross country meet. After his sophomore year, though, Kohrs began to feel weak. He ran poorly in the three-mile event at the SWC meet (he didn't finish the race) then placed 40th at the league's final cross country meet.

Tests were conducted by the Texas A&M University Health Center and a protein deficiency was detected. Kohrs was prescribed several pills and placed on a special diet by a University physician.

Weeks later, he returned to the health center and further tests proved negative. Kohrs and health center personnel felt his weakness was attributed to the protein deficiency.

Last spring, however, Kohrs began to weaken even more. He

was running 60 miles a week and tiring, whereas, he'd regularly train 100 miles a week.

"I was really in bad shape," he said. "I was not able to do any speed work at all."

Kohrs developed back ailments, another symptom of bilharziasis. Yet, he was tested again, and the results showed nothing.

"It was so much frustration," Kohrs said. "I was almost ready to quit."

Lane Mitchell, another A&M distance runner and Kohrs' roommate, noted Kohrs' inactivity.

"I'd come in from class in the afternoons and Manfred would be asleep," Mitchell said. "He'd never done that before, but that semester he slept so much."

Though unable to perform to his capability, Kohrs continued training. Occasionally, he felt comfortable while running.

"I'd have one good race, or I'd feel good," he said. "That good feeling every once in a while kept me at it."

Unfortunately, Kohrs' performance at the SWC outdoor meet last May was poor, and he returned to Natal at the conclusion of spring classes, bitter and frustrated.

For nearly a month, he hibernated.

"I did nothing but sit at home," Kohrs said. "I wasn't feeling well at all."

An ankle injury forced Kohrs to seek medical assistance, and a specialist examined the athlete again. A new method of detecting bilharziasis had been devised, and Kohrs' case was confirmed in late June. He was issued injection tablets and withheld from any physical activity the remainder of the summer.

"I told the doctor I'd been trying to run 60 to 70 miles a week," he said. "He was amazed I'd been able to run that much. It's (bilharziasis) a parasite," he continued. "It takes a

long time to cure, sometimes

and a half to two years."

Kohrs' treatment proved

tive, however. In August he

announced a final time and

green light to continue

Though he returned to

Ted Nelson 15 pounds over

Kohrs quickly redeemed

"I began to get in shape

he said. "In only a week, I

ing 100 to 200 percent better

Realizing he was three

behind in training, Kohrs

his body to the maximum

an extensive strength and

program.

At last fall's SWC

meet in Waco, Kohrs had

day in maroon uniform

third in the conference

year's spring competition,

came a fifth place showing

league's indoor meet and

both Marv Froelick and

Novelli in two events in

with Rice.

Kohrs said his favorite

the 1,500-meter run; he

sonal best of 3:46.9 at the

Palms Invitational last

fastest time in the 5,000

came last week in Aus

Texas Relays.

Currently, he trains

miles a week, and has

creased his pace.

"I'm still behind," Koh

"because I'm competing

those who ran 90 to 100

week the entire summer

why I'm keeping my dista

and doing strength work

for lost time."

After next month's SWC

meet, he will compete in

cross country season and

make

A&M. Upon graduation,

return to South Africa

nationally.

"Running is a way of

said. "It's something I

I'm not the same person

run."

## THE DEAN OF BEER'S QUICKIE QUIZ.

Q: "29.5 Degrees" is:

- The new book by Dennis "Credit Hours" Yeider, college student since 1904.
- The latitudinal coordinate of an area of unexplained phenomena known as the "Bermuda Shorts."
- The temperature of Aunt Gertrude's holiday smooches.
- The temperature at which Schlitz is Chill-Lagered.

A: Always (d) and sometimes (c).

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## SWC basketball recruiting starts

United Press International  
The Southwest Conference, its reputation enhanced by an NIT championship and a third-place in the NCAA tournament, put on a far-flung recruiting show Wednesday, but one of the most sought after players in the SWC's territory got away.

Six of the nine SWC teams announced the signing of at least one player Wednesday on the first day a school could sign basketball players to scholarships and players from Indiana, New Mexico, Delaware, Illinois and Florida were lured to the area.

The two top recruits in Texas were Rudy Woods, 6-11, from Bryan and James Griffin, 6-10, from Fort Worth. And the SWC batted only 500 with those two.

Woods, the chief target of Texas A&M, signed with the Aggies as expected. But Griffin, along with teammate Cletis Hubard, chose to attend the University of Illinois.

Griffin had been the subject of controversy since his coach, Robert Hughes, refused to let any recruiters talk to the player unless they cleared the interview with him.

Texas, Houston and Rice chose not to announce any signings Wednesday, but the SWC picture shaped up in this manner:

ARKANSAS — The co-SWC

champions and third-place finishers reached into the town of Notre Dame to sign Scott, a 6-8 forward who led 17 points a game. The Mustangs also landed 6-6 Keith Pettit, Little Rock; 6-6 Brad Foyt, and 6-6 Tony Brown, Oklahoma State.

The Razorbacks had no guards on their team last season they did not sign any new recruits.

BAYLOR — Coach Jim Fennel picked up highly sought after Fennel of Fort Worth who averaged 24 points a game last season and also recruited 6-5 guard from Irving. "Fennel is a well-around athlete," said Haller, "lucky to get him."

SMU — The Mustangs picked up Dover, Del., to come up with Buckland, a 6-8 prospect. Sonny Allen also had no recruiting a point guard.

Billy Allen, a 6-0 guard with the Mustangs and SMU expected to sign 6-9 Brad Brown, Fort Myers, Fla., today.

TCU — The first recruit by Horned Frogs Coach Tom merville was 6-3 guard Wineinger. "He is one of our shooting guards in Indiana," merville said. "Our top prospect to go out and sign the best guard we could find and we go from here."

TEXAS TECH — The Red

ers got two players from N.M., including high school guard Jeff Taylor. He averaged points a game last season being sidelined with a broken toe.

Joining Taylor at Tech was teammate Steve Smith, who

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