

Fights off regular bouts of asthma

Rodeo winner suffers 'inconveniences'

United Press International
OKLAHOMA CITY — The cowboy slings his rope, dismounts in a flash and crouches to tie the flailing legs of a lassoed calf. Dust swirls in the rodeo arena and rises around the roper's face.

It not the ideal situation for an asthmatic.
But Roy Cooper, 23, has overcome the ailment to become a three-time national winner of top money for the season in professional

calf roping.
Cooper's quick hands and fast reflexes have won him the money title each year since he joined the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association in 1976.

His list of championship titles dates back to his 11th birthday. He has had asthma since birth.

This week Cooper received another title — National Christmas Seals Ambassador for the American Lung Association — and for the next

year the Durant, Okla., roper will help the association raise money to fight lung diseases.

Cooper, who grew up in Monument, N.M., and graduated from Southeastern Oklahoma State University in Durant, is trying for his second world title this week at the National Finals Rodeo in Oklahoma City.

He won his first world title in 1976, the same year he was named Rookie of the Year.

Only a few people have known of his fight with asthma.

"It's not really something I feel like bragging about," Cooper said, smiling. "I've had it as long as I can remember. It's part of my life that I could do without, but I've never let it stand in the way of my goals."

"Asthma slowed me down at times — especially when I was growing up. I couldn't play football, sometimes I couldn't rope when I wanted to, I had to rest more than other kids, and was smaller than most kids."

Cooper said he has "outgrown" the disease to some extent. His wife, Lisa, added that he still has attacks.

Horse hair and dust aggravate the asthma.

"If I didn't take care of myself and

take my medicine, I guess I would be coughing every night," Cooper said.

"Who knows? Maybe one of these days they will find a cure. Until then, I'm going to treat the disease like what it is — an inconvenience. No one ever worried or complained their way into being a winner. It takes hard work, dedication and concentration."

"I plan to keep on roping, keep on winning and plan to tell others with asthma not to worry about the disease, but to concentrate on winning the goals they have set for themselves."

This year he won more than \$67,000, more than any other cowboy in the history of rodeo in one event in a single season



Battalion photo by Tricia Fry

At Dad's class

Texas A&M University soccer instructor Steve Cone brought his daughter, Lisa Cone, 2, to class Thursday. She is recuperating from an appendectomy and will return to her day school soon.

Crippled TCUer raps U.S. MDs

United Press International

GRAPEVINE — Kent Waldrep, who traveled to the Soviet Union to advance his dream of escaping his wheelchair, returned home Sunday and said the attitude of American medicine should be changed.

"We have to fight a battle," said Waldrep, 24, who was paralyzed from the waist down while playing football for Texas Christian University four years ago. "And we have to win that battle."

Waldrep spent six weeks at the Polenov Institute in Leningrad, undergoing treatment which has improved his coordination and dexterity. He still cannot move his legs.

The Soviet doctors injected an enzyme designed to break down scar tissue around Waldrep's spinal cord. The enzyme Ledaza has not been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

Waldrep, accompanied by his mother and father, brought back a supply of the enzyme.

"I don't want to get into a fight with neurosurgeons," said Waldrep who was greeted by 200 cheering people upon his arrival from London. "But, some of those neurosurgeons seem to have been critical of me."

"It's our attitude that needs to be changed. The Soviets do not have the facilities we do, but they are getting things done. They have a positive approach."

"After examining me over there, they told me there was no need for an operation. They said my spinal cord was in excellent condition."

"I had a doctor here sit down with me for 30 minutes and told me (without even examining me) that my spinal cord was damaged and that nothing could be done. He said that just because of the injury that I had. That tends to make me a little bitter."

Waldrep said he has more feeling in his stomach and back muscles and far better coordination in his arms and hands than he did when he left.

"The treatment I received ought to be available to anybody in a wheelchair," said Waldrep, who received his injury from a tackle during an October 1974 game against Alabama.

"When I went there I thought I was awfully strong, but it is incredible what they did in six weeks. They said I was only the third American they had treated and that I offered them the best patients they had had from the U.S. because of the strength I had and because of the condition of my spinal cord."

In addition to the enzyme, Waldrep began a specially designed series of physical therapy exercises and underwent oxygen treatments inside a closed chamber. During the treatment he stood in a specially designed walker and doctors moved his feet.

He said he would continue the therapy which he said was an important part of the overall treatment and would continue to receive the enzyme injections from his parents who were trained by Soviet doctors.

"Anybody who is interested in the therapy should know about it and I will write anybody who wants to know about it and give it to them," said Waldrep. "When I get up it may be on crutches. But as long as I'm in a wheelchair it confines my entire family. Anything a person can do to improve himself, he should try it."

"People who have cancer or muscular dystrophy seek ways to make themselves better. It is human nature to try to improve yourself in a situation like that. I don't look upon this as a false hope for anyone. I feel it is positive treatment."

Funds for the trip were raised in Fort Worth where Waldrep works as an assistant sports information director at TCU. Waldrep's congressman, House Majority Leader James Wright, helped cut through some of the red tape and smoothed Waldrep's trip to the Soviet Union.

"Believe it or not, I am not too tired now that I have seen all of the people. It has my adrenalin flowing," said Waldrep at the end of his nine-hour flight from London.

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