

The Battalion

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Instructor races in Death Valley

By Mark Evans
The Battalion

The highest recorded temperature in Brazos County is 110° F, but when Mike Sandlin began the High-Tech Bad Water-146 race last Wednesday in Death Valley, CA the temperature was a sizzling 127 degrees.

Sandlin, a kinesiology assistant lecturer, finished third out of 15 participants in the 146-mile race from Death Valley (elevation -282 ft. below sea level) to the top of Mt. Whitney (elevation 14,494 ft.), the highest and lowest points in the continental United States. The race included runners from the United States as well as several foreign countries. The race started at 6 p.m. Wednesday evening. Sandlin reached the top of Mt. Whitney 31 hours later after stopping once for an hour and a half nap. The temperature at the top of the mountain was 15° F. He finished four hours behind the second place runner and four hours ahead of the fourth place winner.

"This race was, without a doubt, the hardest thing I have ever done," Sandlin said.

The race is invitational with runners being invited on the basis of their past performance in ultra races (an ultra race is any race beyond the traditional marathon distance of 26 miles), Sandlin said. He spent eight months preparing for the competition, running 100 miles a week during the heat of mid-afternoon.

"As the weather became warmer, I would start to run around twelve to three o'clock in the afternoon," Sandlin said. "I aimed for the heat of the day because that's the conditions most of the race is in."

College Station's sweltering summer fit well into his training, he said, though the heat still made the race difficult.

"I was surprised at how much the heat affected you early in the race," Sandlin said. "Even in the first 20 miles, I could feel the draining effects of the heat."

The mountainous terrain of the race caught him off guard as well. College Station's flat terrain made training for a mountainous course all the more difficult, he said.

"What surprised me the most was how hilly the course was. In my mind, I thought it would be flatter than it actually was."

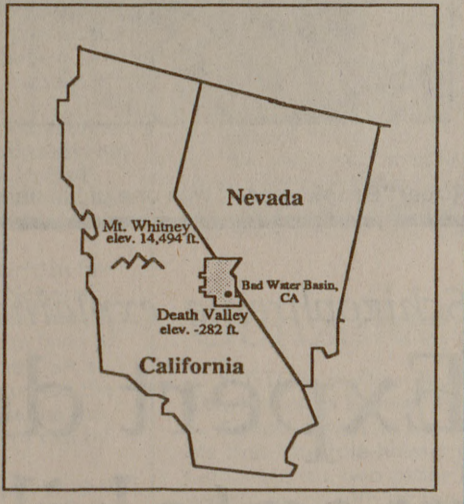
The race crossed several mountain ranges with elevations of 6,000-7,000 ft.

"I really was not anticipating

many problems for the first 50 or 60 miles," Sandlin said. "But by the time I reached the first checkpoint, 18 miles into the race, physically, I felt as if I had run 50 miles."

Because of the toll this type of race can take on a person's body, race officials required each runner to have a crew which followed the runner throughout the race in a car, providing them with water, ice and food. Sandlin's wife and daughter served as his crew.

High-Tech Bad Water 146 Race



GARY CARROLL, JENNIFER MAXWELL/The Battalion

"I had the best crew there," he said.

The top of Mt. Whitney served as the finish line for the race, though once the runners reached it they still had a seven-mile walk before them, back down. Cars cannot reach the top of the mountain. Back home, Sandlin has already returned to work.

"I feel pretty good considering," he said. "I'm not stiff at all, but my legs are real tired... not as bad as I thought I would be."

Sandlin may participate in a 100-mile race in September, but he hasn't decided yet. Each year, he participates in at least one ultra race and about three 50-mile races. He has been racing for 15 years.

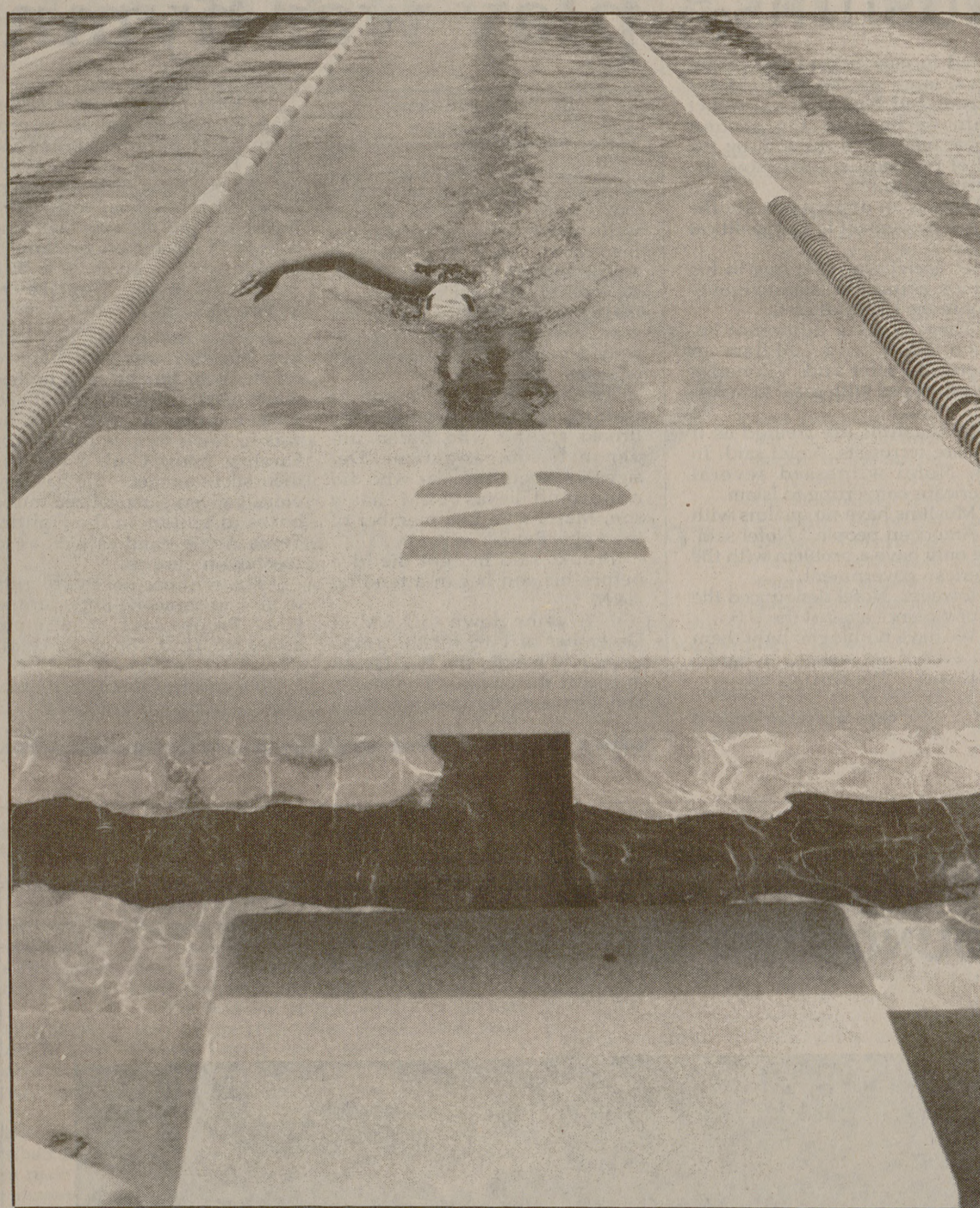
"After I graduated from college, I was looking for something to do because I like the spirit of competition."

"One of the nice things about running is you don't need a partner, and you can do it on your own time," he said.

Sandlin believes that it is important for people to challenge themselves, or to at least try, especially as they get older. They shouldn't fear failure.

Participants in ultra races, including Sandlin, take part for that reason: they relish the challenge.

"A lot of people think we're strange for doing these things, and I agree with them to a point, but it's just a challenge. That's what it's all about."



MICHAEL MARSHALL/The Battalion

Cooling off

Nane Werner, a graduate student in ocean engineering, swims laps in the Wofford Cain

pool to work out. Werner says she swims for enjoyment and exercise.

Gore attacks Bush

Democrats criticize presidential policy

ATLANTA (AP) — The Democrats counterattacked Tuesday in the increasingly bitter political debate over foreign policy experience, with Al Gore declaring that if President Bush and Dan Quayle "are such whizzes



Gore

... why is it that Saddam Hussein is thumbing his nose at the entire world?"

Former President Carter joined the assault, blaming Bush for the "politicizing of foreign policy" and saying it would be "a travesty" if Secretary of State James A. Baker III quit such a vital post to lead the president's re-election campaign.

In contrast, the White House was all but silent on the issue, a day after Bush's spokesman called a statement by Bill Clinton on Yugoslavia "reckless" and Bush-Quayle campaign aides attacked Clinton as lacking both ability and experience in foreign policy.

Presidential spokesman Marlin Fitzwater reiterated Bush's appreciation of the Democratic presidential nominee's general support on the Iraqi situation.

Asked if the White House weren't sending an inconsistent message, Fitzwater smiled and

said, "Nobody gets our blanket endorsements."

Clinton took a verbal shot at Bush's Monday suggestion that he alone had "the experience, the seasoning, the guts" to stand up to such foes as Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

Bush should show such qualities "a little more consistently," Clinton said.

Gore, appearing in Atlanta alongside Carter, accused the Bush administration of focusing on foreign policy to the detriment of domestic matters — and still failing to dislodge Saddam.

Although Americans do have concerns about world affairs, he said, "the dominant issue in this campaign is going to be how we're going to get our country moving forward."

Carter, too, said the "recent success" of Saddam in his nation's standoff with the United Nations over military inspections "doesn't show to me any particular advantage to having experience in the White House."

The former president, during a news conference at the Carter Library, said, "One thing that concerns me very deeply is the politicizing of foreign policy."

About Baker's possible move, Carter said it would be "a very sad day and an unacceptable precedent if the secretary of state does step down from his role and assumes the role of political campaign manager."

Iraq allows U.N. weapon search

MANAMA, Bahrain (AP) — Iraq opened up its Agriculture Ministry to U.N. weapons experts Tuesday after a three-week stand-off, but also unleashed anti-U.S., pro-Saddam demonstrations in Baghdad and other cities.

Protesters were kept away from the ministry, the scene of repeated demonstrations that forced an earlier, predominantly American team to end a vigil outside the building.

Under the cease-fire, Iraq must surrender its weapons of mass destruction under U.N. supervision. A nine-member U.N. team was systematically going through the Agriculture Ministry to look for documents and other materials on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction Tuesday, and was prepared to spend the night to complete its work.

Experts said Iraq likely had removed significant material during the period inspectors were barred.

Two American members of the inspection team remained outside under a compromise worked out between Iraq and the United Nations. None of the experts inside were from countries that went to war last year to force Iraq to reverse its invasion of Kuwait.

Tim Trevan, a spokesman for the U.N. commission on Iraqi disarmament, said after nightfall that the inspectors were still in the

building and he did not discount the possibility they would remain around the clock.

He said the inspectors had not yet reported discovering any weapons-related materials. U.N. officials suspect the ministry contained documents on Iraq's chemical, biological, nuclear and ballistic weapons.

"When I met the members of the government this morning I underlined the importance of security and safety for our people," Swedish diplomat Rolf Ekeus, the chairman of the disarmament commission, told Cable News Network in Baghdad. "I got a very strong promise."

Ekeus led weekend negotiations that allowed inspection of the Agriculture Ministry, then accompanied the inspectors to Baghdad to try to ensure Iraqi compliance.

Ekeus had been backed by U.S. threats of force, but he accepted conditions on the make-up of the team similar to a demand Baghdad made shortly after the inspectors' vigil outside the ministry began July 5. At the time, Iraq said it wanted only neutral-country inspectors in the building.

The United States remained poised to strike if Iraq continued its foot-dragging on compliance with U.N. cease-fire resolutions that ended the Gulf War.



DARRIN HILL/The Battalion

Mike Sandlin, a kinesiology assistant lecturer, finished third in the 146-mile race from Death Valley to the top of Mt. Whitney.

Explosion damages Riverside Campus

By Robin Roach
The Battalion

A gas explosion at the Texas A&M Riverside Campus occurred yesterday at 3:25 p.m. injuring Lone Star Gas employee Danny Meadors.

Meadors was repairing the gas lines in the Gas Regulator House after they had been cut

off during construction on Highway 21. Meadors heard a leak and ran from the building.

"He could foresee something was wrong," Lieutenant Russ Kline, University Police Department, said. "He heard a leak and got out of the building."

There was no fire involved in the explosion. A build up of pressure from the gas leak in the building caused the sides and roof

of the Gas Regulator house to blow out.

"There was extensive damage to the building," Kline said. "The sides of the building were pushed out and the shingles were blown up."

Meadors was taken to St. Joseph Hospital where he received medical attention for a possible broken leg and other injuries.

Further investigation will be conducted to identify the cause of the explosion.