

# Sports science alters course of runners

Austin area runners always have appreciated the hike-and-bike trails and the abundance of running-related activities available here. But Austin's most valuable running resource is its people, particularly those who have chosen careers in the field of sports science and exercise physiology.

That is exactly the reason Marshall Burt chose Austin as the best place to set up shop. Burt is a graduate of George Mason University in Fairfax, Va., where he studied sport sciences. After careful planning, he selected Austin as the city he felt offered the best opportunity to build a team of elite athletes.

"With Dr. Ed Coyle and Dr. Jack Wilmore at the University of Texas, and the network of their fellow researchers, UT has perhaps the best human performance lab in the world" Burt said. "By situating myself here, I can coach people and remain on the cutting edge of sports science research."

Burt refers to his radically new style of coaching as "the sports science method," and it relies heavily on the research of human performance. Burt himself has studied every aspect of this subject, including sports psychology.

"To optimize performance, you must have this type of total approach. The idea is to have control over perfor-



Austin  
running  
Brom Hoban

mance and injuries. Science empowers you to do this," he said.

He seeks nothing less than to revolutionize current methods of distance training.

"The bottom line is training the way the human body works," Burt said. "The current world records are nowhere near what the body can do. I want to take them down."

Coaching has improved over time, but Burt said no one really has applied everything that has been learned over the past couple of decades.

"People apply bits and pieces, but I have integrated all the research that has been done in the past 20 years to develop a cutting-edge program."

Burt discards the idea of weekly mileage and instead focuses on frequency and intensity of workouts. He believes in the cyclical nature of the human body's capacity to respond to high effort then recovery.

He advocates training in three-day blocks: two hard days, then a day of

rest, then repeat. Do that for two weeks, take a three-day hiatus of easy jogging, then start the cycle over.

Besides working with such top athletes as 1,500-meter runners Greg Fuller and Melanie Bloch, Burt plans to set up a team of runners he has coached since high school. Most of these runners will be coming from Virginia.

Although he can help anyone improve, Burt said his method works best when it's introduced at an early age. Burt also holds regular seminars with Run-Tex, and the Adult Fitness Program at UT.

For information about the seminars, contact Run-Tex at 472-3254.

On a short course near Bowie High School, Mark Mason outlegged Scott Wall 14 minutes, 46 seconds to 14:59 at the Manchaca Optimist 5K. Laura Lowy ran 17:34 to beat Rene Pepin's 18:05 for the women's title.

Upcoming races: Block House Creek 5K, 9 a.m. Saturday, Leander, call 331-0393 after 5:30 p.m.; Race for the Cure 5K, 8:45 a.m. Sunday at UT campus near 21st Street and University Avenue, 323-9419.

Brom Hoban is a runner/writer/illustrator in Austin. If you have race or running information, call (512) 295-3707.