Almost exactly 25 years ago, on August 8, 1985, I experienced an exertional heat stroke (EHS) while running a 10K race on the track at the Empire State Games in Buffalo, New York, with less than 100 meters to go. Within moments of my collapse, an athletic trainer was at my side and, soon after, had begun aggressive cooling to treat me. I received prompt transport from the on-site EMTs and aggressive cooling via an ice tub at the local hospital.

I am thankful each and every day for the outstanding chain of care during my EHS and have come to realize that it is likely I would not have survived if I had not been fortunate to be part of this outstanding delivery of medical services. The rapid care minimized the amount of time that my core body temperature was above the critical threshold for cell damage. As a result, I have dedicated my professional career to eliminate the senseless deaths associated with EHS.

On June 22, 2001, I was giving a presentation in conjunction with receiving the New Investigator Award at the National Athletic Trainers’ Association’s (NATA) Annual Meeting in Los Angeles, California. At the beginning of my talk, a member of the audience, Cindy Trowbridge, PhD, ATC, got goosebumps because the EHS story sounded eerily familiar.

When I was done speaking, she raced out of the lecture room and found a former colleague of hers in the exhibit hall. She recounted the story to her former colleague from Ithaca College and asked him if he ever knew the person he had saved from EHS at the Empire State Games 10K race in 1985. He said he did not. The story he had shared in class when teaching about EHS for the past 16 years was the exact story that Cindy heard just moments earlier—her colleague had saved my life. She raced him back to the lecture room where I had given the talk, but I had already left the area.

A few days after the NATA meeting, I found out that Kent Scriber, EdD, ATC, PT, was the athletic trainer from Ithaca College who had treated me. With this news, I, the survivor, found my savior, Kent, and the savior found out the influence that save has had on future efforts to prevent deaths from EHS. Ironically, Kent had used my publications about heat and hydration issues with athletes during his classes in the late 1990s and early 2000s, before he knew that I was the person in the case study he was using as an example in class.
Over the past 9 years, my family and I have visited Kent at Ithaca and Kent has visited us at the University of Connecticut. Our lives, thanks to Cindy, had been connected once again.

My EHS story was the inspiration for the 2-part article regarding the historical account of EHS care that appears in the previous issue and the current issue of *Athletic Training & Sports Health Care*. As a result of our unique shared experience, Kent and I joined forces (along with a few other close colleagues) to deliver an important reminder that EHS has occurred for thousands of years, but we now possess the information to assure that death be prevented. The 2-part article describes EHS from ancient times through current recommendations. The fundamental message is cool rapidly via cold water immersion. Do not let anything impede your efforts to cool as fast as humanly possible. The speed at which you cool will determine whether the outcome is life or death. Choose life! Think of Kent and me.

**REFERENCE**


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*Athletic Training & Sports Health Care* congratulates Thomas W. Kaminski, PhD, ATC, FACSM, on receiving the 2010 Sayers “Bud” Miller Distinguished Educator Award from the National Athletic Trainers’ Association.

Congratulations, Dr. Kaminski, from all of us at SLACK Incorporated.