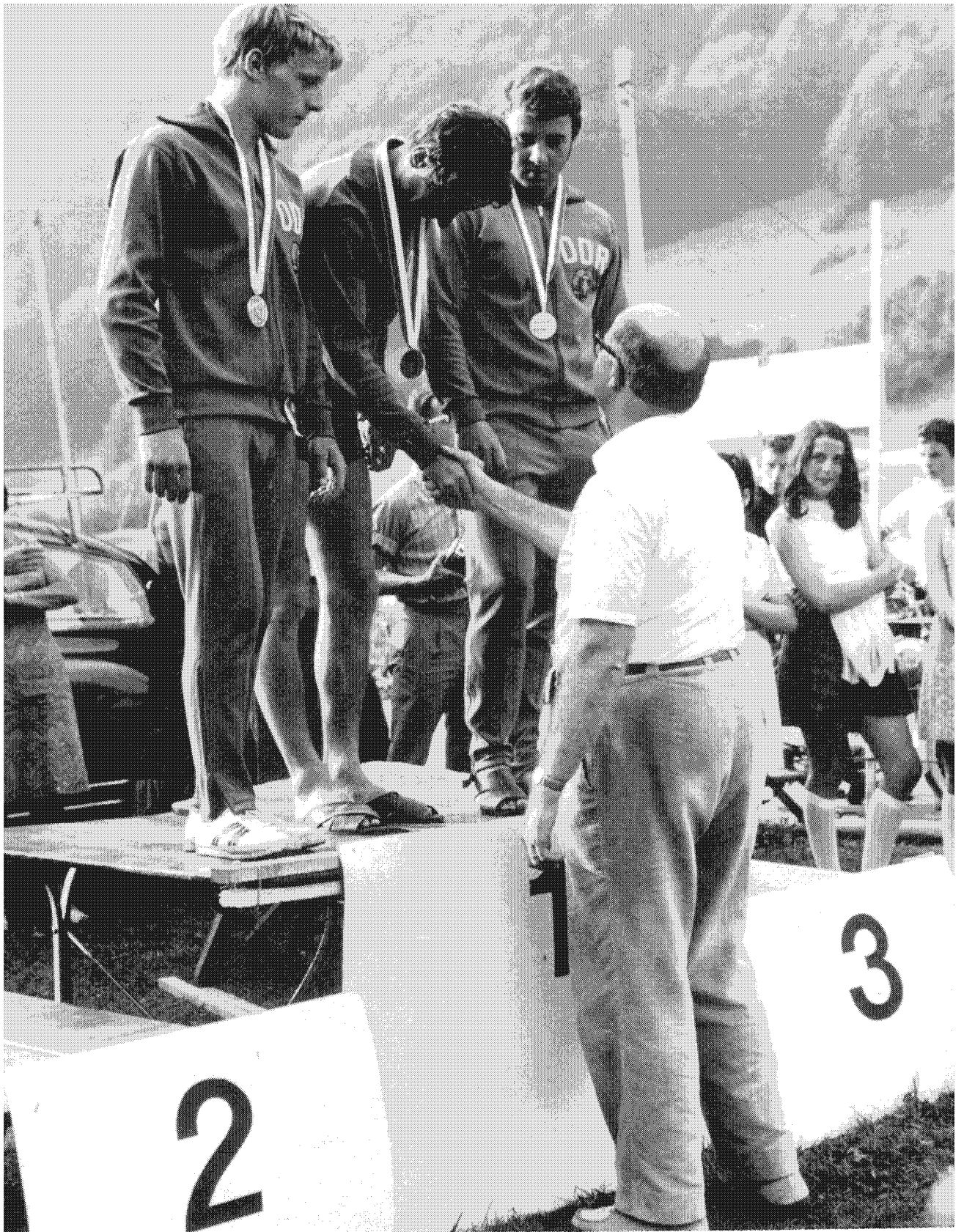


WULF REINICKE



Rainer Eiben, Jochen Forster, and Wulf Reinicke.
(Photo Courtesy of Kanu-Club Luzern)

WULF REINICKE and SLALOM TRAINING IN EAST GERMANY

In 1971, Reinicke was World Champion in C1 Team and Silver Medalist in C1 individual. He was on the East German team from 1969 to 1971 when he defected to West Germany in June, 1971. He married an American and came to the United States in July, 1981.

Wulf was born on April 1, 1949 in Bernburg, East Germany. He is 5'6" and weighs 158 pounds -- the same size and weight as when he competed ten years ago.

Wulf got interested in whitewater canoeing through his father who made a few camping trips with friends. When he was 15, Wulf went on one of these trips and saw some members of the local slalom club in Gera (the Reinickes had moved to Gera by this time), practicing eddy turns and other slalom moves on a weir. These people were in foldboats. Reinicke watched them several times and finally asked if he could learn. Thus he was taken to the club and taught how to paddle K1. This was in June of 1964. Three months later, he was in his first race, a junior regional championships. He had never practiced gates so he was told to try to run only the forward gates, and not to even bother with the upstreams or reverses. As a result he had the fastest running time and placed seventh.

Training in Gera was totally hit or miss; there were no coaches and Reinicke simply tried to imitate the style of the paddlers he saw at DHFK Leipzig, the physical education school in Leipzig where a lot of the top boaters trained.

The club members built their own wooden-canvas boats or earned money with which to buy them by cleaning sewers.

By 1966, Reinicke placed second in the DDR Youth Championships. Siegbert Horn, later World, Olympic and Europa Cup Champion, was 14th in this race. Horn came from another club. It was supported by local businesses, not by the government. Through the club, Horn got lots of help, including the first fiberglass boats to be used in East Germany. Horn is one year younger than Reinicke.

In 1967, Horn won the DDR Youth Championships and Reinicke was second. After this, the Deutsche Hochschule fur Korperkultur (DHFK), in Leipzig, the country's top physical education school, invited him to come train with them permanently.

Two Clubs in East Germany

In the early 1970s, there were only two top whitewater clubs in East Germany, both of them in Leipzig (see map below): DHFK and the Army Sports Club (ASK). The local clubs, such as the one Horn came from in Dessau, were often feeders to one of the two: Horn had to go to ASK after Dessau, he had no choice.

Relationship Between DHFK and ASK

As one might expect, these two clubs were bitter rivals. Reinicke told me he didn't trust anyone from ASK. For example, he said that Horn was sneaky and so was Rolf-Dieter Amend (C2 partner of Walter Hofmann). But these two were Olympic Champions and probably trained as hard as the DHFK people. By way of interest, at ASK in 1967, there was a K1 who was even better than Horn, Rainer Steinbruck, but he was caught stealing and thrown out of the club. Walter Hofmann, according to Reinicke, was very stupid -- but he had 15 years' experience in C2 and eventually became the only C2 paddler to win the World, Olympic, and Europa Cup Championships.

DHFK and ASK were in close proximity to each other so it was possible to hold inter-club competitions frequently.

The ASK athletes were all army officers or sergeants.

About half the DDR World Championship team would come from each club, and two of the national team coaches would come from both DHFK and ASK, making 4 total. Here are some of the top DDR paddlers of that era and the clubs they came from.

DHFK		ASK
Eiben	Lange*	Horn
Forster	Bahmann	Stampe
Trummer-Kretschmer	Opelt-Franz*	Hofmann-Amend
Fleischer*	Reinicke	Gimpel
Bremer*	Doering*	Kohler
Bodecker*		
Kirste*		

If you were affiliated with DHFK, there were three different positions you could have:

1. Student at the regular physical education school: This was a four and a half year course leading to a degree in physical education. Those names above with the asterisks beside them were enrolled in this course.
2. Part-time student in the mechanical engineering school: Of

the above people, Forster, Trummer-Kretschmer and Reinicke were in this course.

3. Part-time job: Eiben did this. He was a blacksmith and had to show up at his job only two half days a week.

Persons in the latter two categories were technically members only of the Sportsclub DHFK, i.e. allowed to use all the training facilities even though they were not enrolled in the regular DHFK school.

There were about 500 athletes at DHFK in some capacity or other. About 40 of these were whitewater canoeists. Of the entire group of 500 athletes, about 20% of them were in the Mechanical Engineering course, 70% in the regular 4-year physical education course, and 10% "worked."

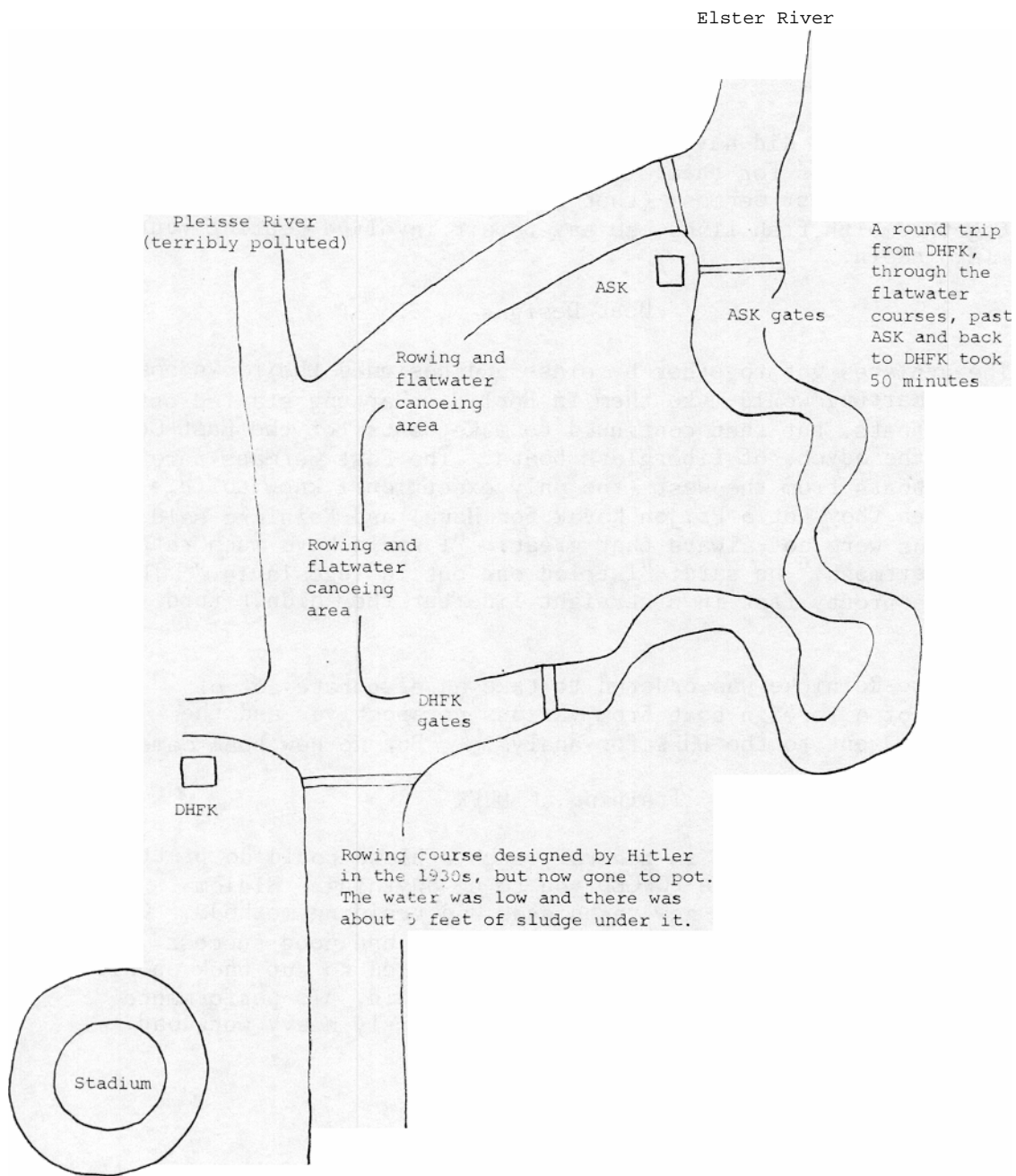
Besides whitewater canoeists, DHFK also had athletes in the following sports:

rowing	volleyball	swimming
bicycling	judo	handball
flatwater canoeing	gymnastics	track and field

Reinicke moved to DHFK (he was officially designated as a member of SC DHFK, i.e. a member only of the sports club) in 1967 and stayed there until 1971 when he defected. He had free room and board, spending money and unlimited training time, but he was able to leave the place only on weekends (unless there were competitions), and for two weeks vacation during the year. His parents were divorced when Reinicke was 16 and they had different thoughts about his going to Leipzig. His father wanted him to get a regular job. His mother really got into canoeing, even going so far as to become a gate judge so she could go to all the races.

As soon as Wulf came to DHFK, he was put in C1 -- the officials said he was too stocky to be really good in K1. He had to sign a declaration, saying that henceforward he put all his future hopes and aspirations in the hands of the DHFK.

When he first arrived in 1967, there were 6-7 boats in each class; 2 coaches and 1 doctor. By 1971, this had grown to 5 coaches for the "A" team; two coaches for the "B" team; one doctor; two masseurs; and two managers. The number of athletes, however, stayed the same.



LAYOUT OF DFK AND ASK IN LEIPZIG
circa 1971

Facilities at DHFK

Much to my amazement, Reinicke said that the facilities were "horrible." The dormitory was a drafty, two-story stone army barracks built by Hitler; there were smelly bathrooms with doors that wouldn't close; no one ever washed his clothes and sweat-soaked gear was simply draped over leaky steam pipes to dry out; the gym had no fan; the water was very polluted -- great big orange blobs came floating down the Pleisse continuously and people had all sorts of eye infections and other problems.

One thing they did have, though, were two aged carpenters who repaired their boats for them. This was useful because you couldn't get duct tape in East Germany (that's why East German end loops were tied together with fish line), so any repair involved getting your hands into resin.

Boat Designs

The athletes got together by class and designed their own boats. Then Horst Hartung would make them in Berlin. Hartung started out making foldboats, but then continued to make boats for the East German team after the advent of fiberglass boats. The East Germans rarely brought in boats from the West (the only exception I know to this was in 1972, when they got a Prijon kayak for Horn) and Reinicke said that their designs were not always that great: "I would have much rather paddled a Lettmann," he said; "I tried one out in Yugoslavia." The DDR C1s were pretty fast in a straight line but they didn't turn very well.

One time Reinicke was ordered to take an elaborate set of photographs of a foreign boat from various perspectives and the pictures were sent to the DHFK for analysis. But no new boat came out of it.

Training at DHFK

Reinicke told me that in general, each athlete could do pretty much as he pleased. No one FORCED you to do anything. Slalom paddlers experimented with new techniques and training methods. One year (1970) Reinicke saw that Christian Doering had good success without a great deal of training so Reinicke tried to cut back on his amount of training. But he found that when he did, his performance went down, too, so by 1971, he was back to a fairly heavy workload.

for Wulf Reinicke SC DHFK LEIPZIG
 1970-1971
 Section: Kanu-slalom Class: C1
 (Training time in minutes per week)

<i>week no.</i>	<i>date</i>	<i>total training</i>	<i>water training</i>	<i>athletic training</i>	<i>gates white water</i>	<i>gates flat water</i>	<i>down- river training</i>	<i>strength</i>	<i>games, running</i>
1.	8/30-9/5	1020	840	180	-	540	300	-	180
2.	9/6-9/12	860	680	180	120	360	200	-	180
3.	9/13-9/19	1100	920	180	190	360	380	-	180
4.	9/20-9/26	900	720	180	180	360	180	-	180
5.	9/27-10/3	1020	750	270	-	450	300	-	270
6.	10/4-10/10	930	660	270	-	300	360	-	270
7.	10/11-17	1170	720	450	-	360	360	90	270
8.	10/18-24	1030	760	270	-	360	400	90	180
9.	10/25-31	720	-	720	-	-	-	270	450
10.	11/1-11/7	720	-	720	-	-	-	270	450
11.	11/8-14	1120	760	360	-	360	400	90	270
12.	11/15-21	1110	720	390	-	360	360	90	300
13.	11/22-28	1100	760	340	-	360	400	90	250
14.	11/29-12/5	1120	850	270	-	400	450	90	180
15.	12/6-12/12	450	-	450	-	-	-	-	450
16.	12/13-19	450	-	450	-	-	-	-	450
17.	1/3-1/9	1290	-	1290	-	-	-	90	1200
18.	1/10-1/16	1290	-	1290	-	-	-	90	1200
19.	1/17-1/23	1290	-	1290	-	-	-	90	1200
20.	1/24-1/30	1420	1180	240	-	-	1180	60	180
21.	1/31-2/6	1410	1150	260	-	-	1150	60	200
22.	2/7-2/13	1500	1200	300	-	-	1200	60	240
23.	2/14-2/20	1200	1020	180	-	180	840	-	180
24.	2/21-2/27	1150	950	200	-	240	710	-	200
25.	2/28-3/6	1150	950	200	-	240	710	-	200
26.	3/7-3/13	1020	840	180	120	-	360	-	180
27.	3/14-3/20	990	750	240	-	450	300	-	240
28.	3/21-3/27	800	620	180	500	-	120	-	180
29.	3/28-4/3	870	630	240	-	450	180	-	240
30.	4/4-4/10	920	740	180	620	-	120	-	180
31.	4/11-4/17	930	690	240	-	450	240	-	240
32.	4/18-4/24	1010	830	180	710	-	120	-	180
33.	4/25-5/1	450	360	90	60	180	120	-	90
34.	5/2-5/5	1010	830	180	620	90	120	-	160
35.	5/9-5/15	1220	1040	180	920	-	120	-	180
36.	5/16-5/22	1180	1000	180	900	-	100	-	180
37.	5/23-5/29	900	660	240	-	360	300	-	240
38.	5/30-6/5	830	650	180	650	-	-	-	180
39.	6/6-6/12	660	480	180	360	-	120	-	180
40.	6/13Worlds	380	320	60	340	-	-	-	60
TOTALS:		39690	26030	13660	6290	7570	12220	1530	1202

Wulf had trained pretty hard back at Gera (once a day), so that the volume of training in Leipzig wasn't all that hard to get used to, although it increased significantly as the years went on.

There were weekly training plans (see above plan) which purported to list everything you were supposed to do. In reality it was impossible to do everything listed there and no one ever did. Everyone cheated: for example, occasionally they were supposed to paddle around the big island between DHFK and ASK. This was always recorded as a 60 minute trip in C1 but it was actually done in about 50 minutes. Reinicke says that occasionally he kept a record -- a real record -- of what he had done and found that if the official plan recorded 1500 minutes of training a week, he'd normally do about 1300.

A typical day would begin with a 5:30 breakfast and have two workouts, only one of which would be in the boat. On Wednesdays there was only one workout, a soccer game. But in the summer, the amount of work increased and there could be two boat workouts a day with a soccer game every night.

Gates were always done under the stopwatch and counting penalties, only the scores were not recorded. The training was done in groups with the paddlers competing against each other. They had about 70 gates on slow moving water. There were four kinds of gate workouts:

1. 30 second courses. 5 runs on 4-5 different courses. This was done mostly in the spring.
2. 3 minute courses.
3. 5 minute courses.
4. 10 minute courses. This was done as "gate loops" at 50-70% effort. A clock was set at ten minutes and when the time was up you stopped, rested for a while and then did it again. Done mostly in fall.

A coach attended all the gate workouts.

During the winter, they did a lot of downriver paddling out in the cold. They would frequently race each other in downriver boats (on flat water). Gates would be done indoors in a swimming pool. But the pool was used a lot by the other athletes, too, so sometimes the paddlers had to go in at weird hours --- like 4:30 in the morning.

Coaching was not very elaborate and most paddlers did not keep extensive logs.



Walter Hofmann (left) and Rolf-Dieter Amend, Olympic
Champions in C2. (Fred Schollhorn Photo)

Sports Medicine

Reinicke says that when he was at DHFK, there was no widespread use of drugs, steroids and so on. That all happened later. However, even in the early 1970's the doctor would give you what you wanted, and some people experimented. Eiben, for example, took steroids in 1971 and he could do no better than 13th at Merano. The next year, he junked the steroids and won the Olympics. The doctor offered Reinicke tranquilizers but he refused to take them. Reinicke said that he personally never took any drugs but that after he defected he had some physical problems with his teeth and dizzy spells. He thought there may have been stuff put in his food. He did use the masseur a lot and especially the underwater massages and saunas that were available.

Food

When Reinicke was at DHFK, he says there were three food categories, depending on how good an athlete you were:

1. Olympic Team
2. "B" Team
3. Newcomers

The Olympic Team got huge, good meals while the newcomers got skimpy meals. All three categories ate together, however, so there was a lot of bad feeling and resentment.

Training camp food was really excellent, however, lots of oranges and other things that were impossible to get in East Germany if you weren't an athlete. At the camps, there was a little grocery store, too, where you could buy what you wanted -- using "food stamps" as money.

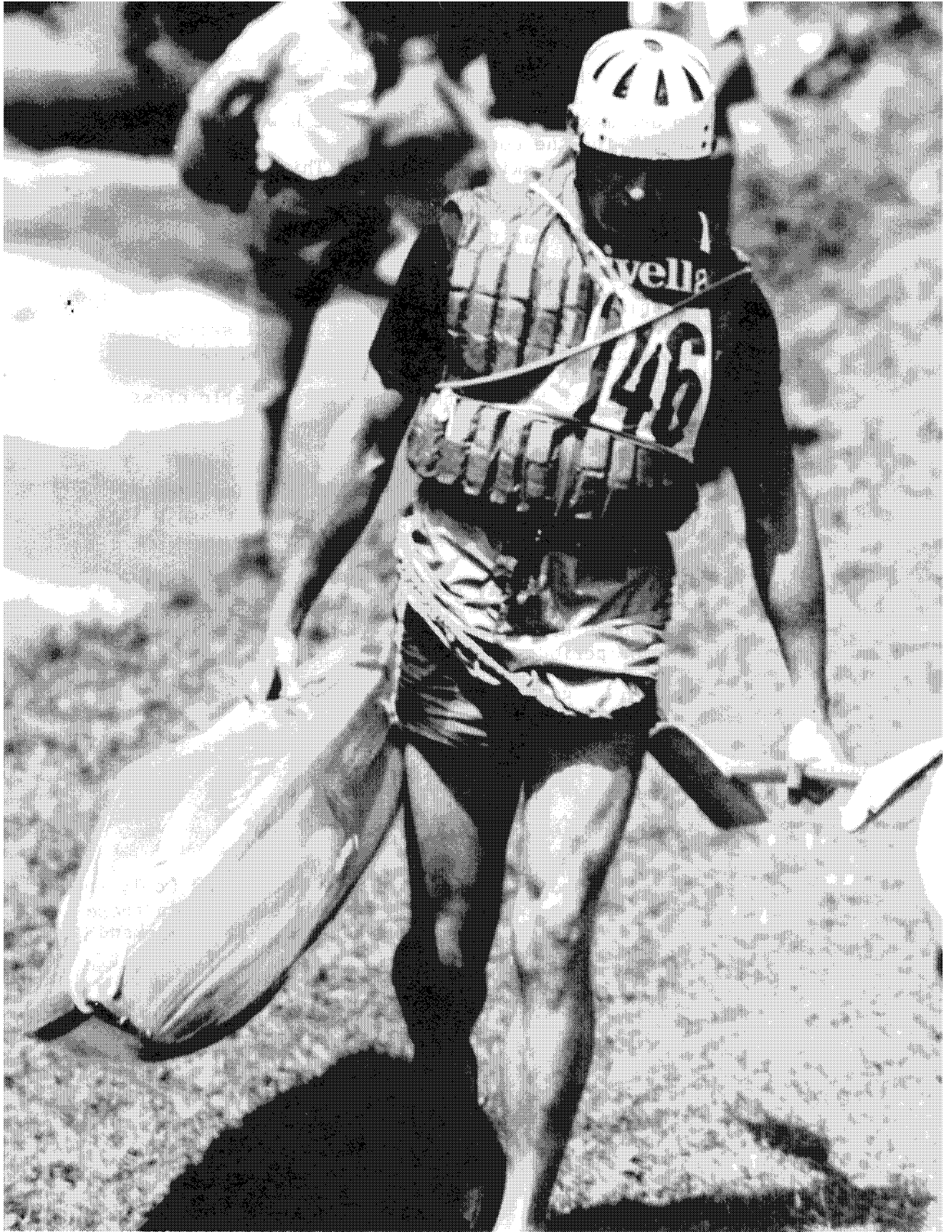
Training Camps

DHFK paddlers quite frequently left Leipzig for various camps. Some of them:

* In November, they had an annual "cure" in Kreischa for a whole month. Here the pace was pretty slow: easy workouts, massages, boozing, resting, etc. The food was great. Only the top athletes from all DDR teams could come here.

* In February there was a four week ski camp in Bulgaria with the flatwater paddlers. Reinicke said the only time he went on this trip was a disaster -- poor facilities and very tiring. The regimen:

- 6 a.m.: half hour swim in freezing pool.
- 7 a.m.: breakfast.



Christian Doering, Kl. Silver Medalist in 1971, World Champion in team (Photo Courtesy of Kanu-Club Luzern)

8 a.m.: Communist party meeting. Each athlete was expected to join the Communist party (Reinicke never did). At these meetings each athlete was expected to get up and make a little speech about how he could do better for the country, etc.

10 a.m.: Cross country skiing 30 km. This was tough because the slalom paddlers could not keep up with the flatwater paddlers. Furthermore, no one knew what kind of wax to use and they were always getting it wrong. Great balls of snow would collect on the skis and it was impossible to keep scraping them off.

5 p.m.: More cross-country skiing -- or downhill skiing. The slalomists always preferred the downhill skiing, even though there was no lift, because anything was better than those interminable cross country stints.

In 1971, Reinicke didn't go to Bulgaria. He said he was sick. Instead of skiing, he practiced downriver paddling and improved so much that when the team came back from Bulgaria, he never again lost to people who used to beat him before going to Bulgaria.

In general during the spring and summer, DHFK paddlers followed the principle of two weeks on flatwater at home and two weeks on whitewater gates somewhere else, usually in Spittal. Sometimes they would go to Zwickau for periods of 3-4 days.

Standardized Tests

Three times a year, in the fall, winter, and spring, the DHFK paddlers would do the exact same flatwater gate course (of 6 gates) for time to check progress.

Team Selection

Team selection was based on 4 head to head competitions (only the 3 best counted). Points were awarded based on your finishes in these races, which started at the end of April and continued every weekend thereafter for 4 weeks.

World Championships Preparation

After the team was selected in 1971, it went to a 5 week training camp in several places: Muota, Lipno, Spittal, among others. Races were held there. Then, the team returned home to Leipzig for 2 weeks before leaving for Merano a week before the World Championships. At Merano, there were as many coaches, doctors, managers, flunkies and hangers-on as there were DDR athletes.

At the Worlds, each athlete had his own food box -- not because only East German food was good enough for East German athletes, but because the team simply pocketed the money given it to buy food in Merano and brought free food from home instead!

Under the Table Pay-Offs

In 1972 the Olympic Champion in whitewater slalom got 20,000 East German Marks. No one receiving this was supposed to tell the other athletes. If Reinicke had returned to the DDR after Merano, he would have received 3,000 Marks each for his silver medal in the slalom individuals and his gold medal in the team race.