



Noel Hanna preparing for his trip to the Sahara Desert.

Fitness instructor competes in race across Sahara

DROMARA, Fitness Instructor Noel Hanna will soon be putting himself through physical and mental torture as he competes in the 'Marathon Des Salles Race.'

The marathon is a six day race, comprising of 220km on foot across the Sahara Desert.

"The race is classed as one of the toughest foot races on earth, with temperatures ranging from freezing at night to 120-130 degrees during the day," said Noel.

To add to his tortuous task, he must carry with him everything he needs for the six days in a ruck sack.

Noel is no new comer to these endurance races as he already has a first

Report by
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place under his belt in the Himalayan 100 mile stage race, which he did in November 1997.

LOS ANGELES

More recently, in September 1998 he competed in the Los Angeles Crest 100 mile endurance race over mountains, and came in, in 19th position.

To complete the race Noel must be at his fittest and he is maintaining this level of fitness with an arduous training schedule.

The Fitness Instructor and Civil Servant covers between 60-80 miles per week running through the Mourne Mountains along with at least three weight training sessions per

week.

To get used to competing in the heat Noel has come up with an ingenious idea of using an exercise bike in the sauna to help his body adapt to working in extreme temperatures.

500 COMPETITORS

Said Noel, "The race will consist of 500 competitors world wide, with 110 coming from Ireland and the UK."

He spoke about his aspirations for the race, which starts on April 3.

"As far as winning the race is concerned I believe the Moroccans will be favourites.

"My personal target is to finish in the top 10 of the UK and Ireland competitors or in the top 40 over all," Noel concluded.