

Noel prepares for one of the toughest races on earth

A DROMARA man is preparing for one of the toughest races on earth, a 220km run through the Sahara desert.

The Marathon des Sables is the latest test of endurance being undertaken by Noel Hanna.

He will have to cope with blistering hot conditions, with daytime temperatures of 130 degrees and freezing conditions at night.

Noel leaves for the six day/seven day race next Wednesday.

Training for the event consisted mainly of running in the Mourne's and putting an exercise bike in the sauna at his local fitness club.

The race involves carrying all the supplies needed for the week long run, with competitors racing during the day and camping at night.

There is only one other person from Northern Ireland taking part and Noel says the challenge, which is in its 14th year, is "something different."

"They give us nine litres of water a day," said Noel, who added that the main risk of the race is dehydration.

"I'm looking forward to the event.

"I was in California in September for a 100 mile race. I enjoy doing these because it is something

different and you don't get too many people doing it," he said.

"This is supposed to be one of the toughest foot races on earth."

Noel said that the race is usually won by the Moroccans, who are used to the heat and "fly".

"I have a race in Death Valley in July and there is only 40 people invited worldwide to take part," he added.



Dromara man Noel Hanna training for the Marathon Des Sables.