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Recession-Proof Bill Bradley Attempts One of the Most Extreme Challenges in Endurance Running

Bradley will run 300 miles in a Double Badwater Ultramarathon, July 18-24

Santa Rosa, California, June 8, 2010 – Santa Rosan Epic Bill Bradley, whose motto is “show up and suffer,” will undertake the toughest running challenge of his life and one few extreme athletes have ever attempted. He will run a Double Badwater Ultramarathon, covering 292 miles from Death Valley to Mt. Whitney and back in temperatures up to 130 degrees. His grueling run will start on July 18 and take seven days to complete.

The Badwater Ultramarathon is billed as “the world’s toughest foot race” and pits the fiercest endurance athletes from around the globe against each other. The course starts at 282 feet below sea level and includes 13,000 feet of climbing and 135 miles of running to reach Whitney Portal at 8,360 feet, which is the gateway to Mt. Whitney. Bradley completed the 135-mile Badwater Ultramarathon in 2008 and 2009 in less than 60 hours.

For Bradley, the Badwater Ultramarathon served as a training ground. Doubling the race, he will climb another 11 miles to the Mt. Whitney summit (the highest point in the contiguous United States at 14,495 feet), battling oxygen-thin air, steep drop-offs and sudden electrical storms. Then Bradley will return to where he started for a total of 292 miles.

In this, his first Double Badwater, Bradley will compete only with himself and the elements. With temperatures that reach 130 degrees and ground temperatures that can exceed 180 degrees, he will be clothed from head to toe in light fabric to keep from frying in the sun. Bradley plans to run for 20 hours a day while sleeping only two to three hours each night.

Bradley is an extreme ultra-distance runner, a long-distance swimmer, an Ironman triathlete and a Race Across AMerica cycling veteran. Previously, he owned a successful chain of 17 video rental and game stores that went bankrupt in 2005. After his marriage ended that same year, he began competing in more and more extreme events to boost his self-confidence and rebuild his life. Bradley had already competed in triathlons and foot races, finishing in the middle of the pack at best.

“If I can go out there as a 49-year-old with my average talent and compete in the world’s toughest endurance events, why can’t the average person go out of his comfort zone, face his fears and go after his goals?” Bradley said.

Bradley has finished seven Ironman Triathlons; a Triple Ironman (composed of a 7.2-mile swim, a 336-mile bike ride and a 78.6-mile run); the Race Across AMERICA, a 3,000-mile bike race from Oceanside, Calif. to Annapolis, Md.; the Furnace Creek 508, a bicycle race through Death Valley; the Susitna 100, a 100-mile run across the frozen Alaskan tundra while pulling a 40-pound sled filled with survival gear; among others.

Bradley’s next goal is to swim 21 miles across the English Channel without a wetsuit in September. Training for his run and swim simultaneously, Bradley spends most weekends swimming in the chilly San Francisco Bay without a wetsuit for up to six hours, running for up to six hours in the Santa Rosa hills, and afterward, sitting in a 225-degree dry sauna for a half-hour to build up his heat tolerance. There’s no time to rest, because as Bradley proclaims, he must “keep living that crazy dream.”

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