

South County resident takes on the Death Race



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South County resident Loren Lee, 36, has committed to attempt the Death Race for the second time this June. To his knowledge, Lee says he is the only Oklahoman to be competing in this grueling race.

"There are millions of running races, thousands of marathons, hundreds of triathlons and dozens of ultra-marathons, but there is only one Death Race," stated the 2014 Death Race press release.

According to the release, the Death Race has been held annually since 2005 in Pittsfield, Vt., and the 2014 Death Race is scheduled to begin June 27, with just 300 elite endurance athletes willing to test their mental and physical prowess.

Lee said the whole point in the Death Race is to test your limits physically, mentally and emotionally. Having spent six years in the Army, Lee was no stranger to the physical demands of the race when he first competed in 2011.

"The first time I competed in the Death Race I had just started doing 5Ks and the Warrior Dash, and I saw some stuff about the Death Race online and it looked fun and it looked like something I could do," said Lee.

Unfortunately, he was not quite as prepared for the mental challenges presented by the Death Race, and he bowed out at the 24 hour mark. This year, out of stubbornness and determination, Lee said he is going back for a rematch.

"I really psyched myself out last time," said Lee. "I had just gotten a new job and my wife was pregnant. I just kept thinking if I get hurt how will I take care of my family. Also, my wife was my support person. She would meet me at different stations or points along the race and she had to sleep in the car. She was two or three months pregnant at the time and I kept thinking why am I having her do this."

This year Lee said he will have a support person who will accompany him and actually travel as much of the course with him as possible.

"It was more the mental challenges that got to me last time," said Lee. "And this year I think having that support person in the course will really help me stay focused."

Last year, according to the release, only 10 percent of the registered participants were still standing after the event ended after nearly 70 hours.

"The obstacle and challenge-driven race requires competitors to complete numerous grueling mental and physical challenges throughout a 40-mile course that runs through the Vermont woods," stated the press release. "During the Death Race, competitors may be asked to chop wood for two hours; complete a 30-mile hike with rocks and weighted packs; build a fire from scratch; cut a bushel of onions; or after 24 hours of racing, memorize the names of the first 10 U.S. Presidents or a Bible verse, hike to the top of a mountain and recite them back in order -- miss a word and you get to do it again...and again...and again."

The press release states, that unlike other endurance races that offer a detailed map, Death Racers have no idea what to expect because the course map and list of challenges are purposely kept secret. The secrecy provides competitors with one of their biggest challenges. The length of the race ranges from 48 to 72 hours, and not knowing where the metaphorical light is at the end of the tunnel can be sheer torture.

"Just like life, the Death Race is designed to push and aggravate people to such a point that even the most stoic eventually fail," said Joe De Sena, co-Founder of the Death Race and the Reebok Spartan Race Founder. "Only those people possessing incredible discipline under the most insane and even delusional circumstances can call themselves a finisher. These athletes

are willing to complete the journey at all costs. The fact that people endured for 70 hours to see what they are made of, is just remarkable and awe-inspiring.”

Lee said he has already begun training for the 2014 Death Race in June and his training focuses on weight training, lower body and backpacking and hiking.

“You know how people use the phrase ‘test your limits?’ Well I really tested and found my limit the last time I competed in the Death Race,” said Lee. “For example, I thought going in to it that I would be able to push myself a lot further than what I did.”

Lee said if he succeeds this year he will not likely compete in the Death Race again. However, he said if he fails, he would like to say he will keep trying until he succeeds.

“I’ve got to finish this year, because I don’t want to keep going back. I also don’t like to lose,” said Lee. “I also want to set an example for my two-year-old son and show him that just because I got knocked down once or failed, doesn’t mean I won’t get up and try again.”

For more information on the Death Race visit www.PeakRaces.com or www.Facebook.com/spartanrace.