

# The Spartan Death Race: “YOU MAY DIE!”

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“You may die!” That’s the motto for the Spartan Death Race. Only 10 percent of the participants will actually finish. St. John Fisher College professor Erik Winarski, plans on competing this June. He says, “I’m getting ready. I’m ready to go as far as I can.”

According to the website, [www.youmaydie.com](http://www.youmaydie.com), the race was created by Joe Desena and Andy Weinberg. It has been held annually since 2005 and each year the race has had a different theme. This year’s theme is “The Explorer” and will take place on June 25, 2014 on the rugged terrain of the Green Mountains in Pittsfield, Vt. The race will start early that Friday morning and end when the last remaining participant crosses the finish line.

Winarski decided to participate in the race after watching his brother-in-law participate last year. Although his brother-in-law did not finish the race, he was able to watch some of the events he participated in and says, “It looked interesting and it looked like an opportunity to train yourself, [to] train your body towards a particular goal and then see if you can accomplish that goal.”

The race is meant to test participants to see how much they can endure. “Only consider this race if you have lived a full life to date,” is posted on the race’s website to serve as a forewarning to potential participants.

In order to prepare, Winarski is performing cardio exercises and lifting weights. He says, “You can’t exactly prepare for specific events because you don’t know what these events are going to be. You just end up doing a lot of different types of

exercises.” He has also been doing some research and is a member of the Facebook group, “Peak Races,” where he can see what others are doing to get ready for the death race.

According to the Spartan Death Race website, participants could be asked to chop wood until their hands are bloody, then memorize the first 10 U.S. presidents, hike up a mountain, climb back down and recite who the 10 presidents are again. There is no guidance along the way and the officials do not tell the participants what challenges they will face. Each year is different, so there’s no way of knowing exactly what grueling exercises participants will have to endure. The event is meant to break the participants down physically, mentally and emotionally. The goal is to make you want to quit.

Winarski plans on ramping up his exercises and using heavier weights. Although the race is five months away, he said, “I’m getting excited about it, I think it will go by quickly, especially with being busy with the semester.”



Photo provided by Erik Winarski  
Wood cutting is a chore for Winarski that also builds upper body strength



Photo provided by Erik Winarski  
Erik Winarski training for lower body strength and endurance by pulling logs in a sled



Photo provided by St. John Fisher College  
Professor Erik Winarski