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NCR blogger racing across Sahara Desert

by Tom Gallagher

NCR Today



A week or so ago, we alerted *NCR* readers that one of our bloggers,

Tom Gallagher, would be racing across the Sahara Desert in Egypt on a 150-mile race. It's not his first such race; he has competed in the Atacama Desert in Chile and the Gobi Desert in China.

For Gallagher, these events combine, he says, "athletics, spirituality and terrific people in a compelling location -- the desert."

Gallagher uses his races as fundraisers and raised more than \$30,000 for Malta House for women and children in Norwalk, Conn., through the first two races. His goal is to raise \$15,000 in the Sahara. You can find out more at www.maltahouse.org.

Gallagher is in the desert and -- believe it or not -- he's blogging.

Here are his first two entries. We'll keep you posted.

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Stage 1

25-Oct-2009 01:36:24 AM [(GMT-05:00) Eastern Time(US & Canada)]

Sahara Race (Egypt) 2009

Day 1 We had a long haul yesterday enroute to Camp 1, a broken down bus caused the 4 bus caravan to arrive at camp at 12:45am. This morning the sun is up early and its going to be warm...huh...hot. We begin with a 21 mile day, so its a gentle way to begin the week. We expect the teperature to be 100 degrees F. Water and electrolytes will be key. A lot of terrific people. Thank you all for the emails, blogs and shout outs. I received a number of cheers from friends from other races, for which I'm grateful. Off to close up my backpack, which weighed in at 18lbs. Course briefing in 1/2 hour.

Day 1 - In the bank

25-Oct-2009 01:21:40 AM [(GMT-05:00) Eastern Time(US & Canada)]

Sahara Race (Egypt) 2009

Welcome to the Sahara Desert. Pretty brutal first day. Heat really taking its toll on the field. Many have gotten muscle cramps in camp - myself including. So today was 22 miles. Tomorrow is 28 miles with the final two sections labeled "Difficult." The deep sand just stops you in your tracks. One key is to find hard packed sand to make your steps firmer. There were a lot of fine performances out there today and fun to watch. The last section really took a toll on people. One issue was hands swelling, looking like sausages. The key is to hold one's hands up to help reduce the swelling.

A couple of highlights. Ron Hackett is blind and is running the race with two guides. There's a 19 year old college student from NYU and a chap from the UK who is 70 yrs old. Also in the field is Jennifer Murray, a 68 yr old who holds the record for flying a helicopter around the world.

The desert is beautiful, unrelenting. The key is bringing humility and patience the landscape, of course, those who know me recognize that humiltiy and patience are my strong suits (!). Nonetheless, the keys are to go with the flow, stay hydrated with water and electrolytes and move forward.

Onward.

Thanks for all the support. It's invaluable.

Tom

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