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**2012 Isles
Miles Challenge**
The Legendary One Mile Runner
Completes "Toughest" Run in Bermuda

2012 Isles Miles CHALLENGE



By Diane Alter



The Legendary One Mile Runner's "Toughest" Run in Bermuda

Seven one-mile races on seven different islands in seven different time zones in seven consecutive weeks all run in under five minutes was the latest challenge David O'Meara, aka the legendary One Mile Runner, recently successfully completed.

And just to make things interesting, if O'Meara failed to run a race in under five minutes, he would have needed to re-run the race during the same week on a different island in the same time zone until he broke five minutes. But that wasn't necessary; this extreme athlete smashed that goal in all seven races in his 2012 Isles Mile Challenge.

The event marked the fifth such challenge in as many years. This year's feat combined the themes from the first four tours: speed/endurance (2008); recovery (2009); international travel (2010); and adventure racing (2011).

Determined, destined, and physically and mentally adept all describe O'Meara, who makes his home in Sarasota, FL, to a tee. This sinewy, sturdy and solid chap is a world renowned coach, speaker, author and athlete. Agile, alert and quick, O'Meara's every movement is testament to his tantalizing talents. He moves more like a thoroughbred than a human. His cache of admirable traits adds to his prowess as man, mentor and competitor. His passion and life's work is to inspire athletes 30 years-of-age and older to learn how to avoid injury, recover quicker and develop functional strength.

O'Meara's resume is long and impressive. From 1986 through 1991, O'Meara lived in Chennai, India, while coaching the National Junior Davis Cup Team. Among the lengthy list of his acclaimed and accomplished clients are 1996 Atlanta Olympic bronze medalist in tennis Leander Paes

(who just finished competing in his 6th Olympics), and world-class cricket batsman Shiv Chanderpaul.

What's even more impressive is O'Meara's history as a competitive runner. He is what some might call a late bloomer. "I didn't competitively run until I was 37, racing only 5ks. I never raced the mile until 42," O'Meara recalls. He was then like a teenager in love—in love with racing the mile. David went on to be ranked 7th in the country in the 40-44 division (at the age of 44) thanks to his 4:37 mile at an indoor national race in Boston.

O'Meara's face-off with age and time began in 2008, when he hit the milestone birthday of 45. O'Meara celebrated with a personal challenge event: the 20/20/20. He set out to run 20 one-mile road races in 20 weeks in 20 different cities dotted across the United States and Canada, each under five minutes---and he did just that.

In 2009, the test was the Smooth Toe New England Marathon. O'Meara finished the 26.2 miles in less than 2 hours 11 minutes (averaging every mile in under five-minutes).

In 2010, O'Meara went intercontinental with the Around the World in Less Than 30 Minutes dare: running six one-mile races in six weeks on six continents in 29:25.95—beating his goal of 30 minutes total time.

In 2011, O'Meara selected five of the seven Wonders of the Ancient World in his "Five Wonders Under 25 Minutes." Once a month for five

months, battling horrific heat, high humidity and other intense elements, O'Meara ran one-mile races at the Grand Canyon, Stonehenge, the Golden Gate Bridge, the Taj Mahal in India and Petra in Jordan, finishing with a cumulative sum of 24:31.07, beating his goal of 25 minutes.

In 2012, at age 49, O'Meara proved that he can still consistently run a mile under 5 minutes. The only one this resolute and fierce competitor had to beat, and his only competitor during this 49 day event as he traversed 12 time zones and voyaged over some 30,000 miles, was himself.

David had the advantage this year of consistent sea-level altitude on all seven island locations. Among the myriad disadvantages were: hilly coast roads; desert and tropical temperatures; gulfstream humidity; the rainy northwest; the wicked challenges of jetlag and lost slumber; and the inimitable unknowns as he jettisoned halfway around the world.

The first race was run on June 29 in Galway, Ireland. In typical Irish weather-- a wee bit of rain and a tad of wind causing quaint country roads to be slick-- O'Meara boldly braved the elements and managed to smash the 5 minute mile barrier finishing the Irish run in 4:49. It wasn't simply the luck of the Irish, although O'Meara does boast of Emerald Isle lineage, it was pure talent.

Of the Irish leg, O'Meara, traveling with his wife Seyken and a team of professional timekeepers, photographers and videographers said, "We saw the sun for just a few hours in Ireland. The Irish people were a bright spot and extremely friendly. They made us all feel right at home. Our Irish host from Clifden, John Wallace, was a typical Irish bloke full of love and Irish humor (and his favorite Guinness). Our first race in Galway County mixed a bit of wind, rain and slippery roads, but it was a good start to the tour."

On July 5, in Reykjavik, Iceland, feeling the effects of jet lag, a weary O'Meara welcomed the first sunny day since departing the United States. Among the breathtaking backdrop that Iceland's landscape affords, David crushed the five minute goal, running the mile in 4:42. Completely satisfied with the race, and soaking in the boiling mud springs, David said, "If you haven't visited Iceland, please put it on your list. You feel like you are on another planet."

The third leg of the Isles Mile Challenge took David to the beautiful Greek island of Santorini. Amid a spectacular Mediterranean milieu dripping with brilliant sunshine, miraculous volcanic cliffs and peaked roof-top dipped in a bright hue of blue, O'Meara, "a bit fatigued from a third one mile run in as many weeks," again smashed the 5 minute mile goal finishing in 4:45.

Heading back to Eastern Time zone in the United States, David ran his fourth leg on home turf at Mount Desert Island, Maine. In an amazing time of 4:39, David shattered his self imposed minimum 5 minute mile objective.

For the fifth leg of the challenge, David jetted to Bermuda, known for its blushing pink sand beaches and sun kissed scenery. Few realize how hilly this idyllic Atlantic island is. The race took place just outside the capital city of Hamilton on a wonderfully warm July morning. "Bermuda is an up and down island, making Race #5 on the Isles Miles Challenge my most difficult race yet," David said.

"I am a Florida flat terrain kind of guy, so Bermuda's hilly landscape was challenging," O'Meara confessed. David ran a 4:49 mile on what he describes as a "sometimes dangerous course." But, he noted that he was well protected by his driver, Jack Mungal. "We raced down Middle Road in the early morning. It is a very busy road - it is good we started early."

Team David stayed at Aunt Nea's Inn at Hillcrest in the old town of St. George. "Theresa (the Proprietor) was a huge help in arranging many of our needs during our stay." After celebrating five successfully completed runs, O'Meara relished in Bermuda's blissful bounty and headed to the beach. "Horseshoe Bay is one of my favorite beaches in the world," this world traveler admitted.

It was then off to Fidalgo Island. If you are scratching your head and wondering where the heck Fidalgo Island is and how come you've never heard of it, you are not alone. O'Meara didn't know a thing about this northwestern island until he began mapping out the Isles Miles Challenge. Located roughly 80 miles northwest of Seattle, WA, Fidalgo Island is a

"wonderful getaway." O'Meara was blessed with superb weather for his run as this perfectly pleasant island is shielded in a rain shadow. The surrounding mountainous terrain blocks out the relentless rains that keep Seattle damp and wet for a good part of the year. On a tranquil country road that is indigenous to the area, David ripped race #6 in 4:43. Six down--one to go.

The seventh and final challenge took place in heavenly Hawaii. The race was run on part of the Ironman bicycle course. Sandwiched in by volcanic rocks on each side of the road, O'Meara raced on Route 19 just outside the Kailua-Kona airport. "I had of lot of difficulty in this race breathing the dry air. I know I breathe like a locomotive train when racing the mile anyway, but this was different. You can hear me wheezing on the video throughout the race. I gutted out a 4:44 mile and successfully completed the 2012 Isles Mile Challenge finishing seven island one-mile races in seven different time zones in seven weeks all under five minutes," O'Meara said in one long succession without taking a breath.

As for what he will do next year when he hits the big 50 in April, O'Meara isn't sure, but chuckles when he says he has received a plethora of suggestions. Whatever it is, you can be sure it will be another amazing and inspiring challenge.

Upon finishing this year's event, O'Meara launched Body Protection, a movement based training program designed to prevent injury and optimize athletic performance in any sport at any age. The program's core is focused on providing competitive athletes with strength, endurance, speed, explosion and flexibility while developing the body's connective tissues while training. Included on this DVD are O'Meara's secrets and tips, never before shared, for staying healthy and injury free. Studies show that up to eight of every 10 runners are hurt every year no matter their shape or size, their speed, or the amount (or lack of) training they engage in. O'Meara's mission is to reduce that number. "Almost all sports require a combination of strength and endurance," O'Meara coaches. His Body Protection formula preps the body for the repetitive nature of any demanding sports.

O'Meara follows a natural and vegan diet and doesn't take vitamins, preferring to get his nutrients from whole foods such as fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds. "I haven't had any meat, diary, eggs or alcohol since I was 23," he notes adding that while he agrees it isn't for everyone, it works for him. David doesn't stretch before a race, advises to never stretch a cold muscle fully and swears by massages. He shuns yoga and maintains body building is simply for show. And yet his regime, which includes a series of flowing movements and motions, so different and unique from what numerous experts have preached for decades, have kept him healthy and free from injury during his competitive years and throughout all his demanding challenges.

"While I want to be the voice of the older athlete, I speak for athletes of all ages," O'Meara says. He speaks with such fervor and conviction at a clip quicker than most, leaving some to wonder if he is an enthusiast who runs or is an enthusiast because he runs. Whatever the case, David makes it clear that you don't stop running because you get old; you get old because you stop running.

You can find out more about O'Meara's program and DVD on his website at www.onemilerunner.com

