Tampa attorney finishes grueling Comrades Marathon in South Africa

by Brad Davis
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Tampa, Fla. - Rich McCrea had a tough but fulfilling day in early June.

"I've run 24 marathons and 10 ultra-marathons. It is by far the most difficult thing I've ever done," McCrea said.

McCrea loves to run. He uses marathons as training for bigger goals. Just last week, McCrea competed in the Comrades Marathon in South Africa. It's the world's oldest and largest ultra-marathon -- a grueling 56 miles.
"It was a lot of suffering, a lot of cramping. The last 25 miles I was dealing with a lot of pain. And so I just had to use my mind to overcome the pain," McCrea said.

Not only is the distance a huge challenge, but the race must be completed in less than 12 hours. McCrea completed the Comrades in just under 10 hours and forty-five minutes. He is 60 years old.

"It was not an easy thing to do, and I'm not sure that anyone completely sane would do it. But it was a goal that I wanted to attain," he said.

An attorney for Greenberg-Traurig in Tampa, McCrea is humble about his accomplishments. He's also run for 12 straight hours to help raise money for cancer research.

"I don't train to compete. I use the competition to force myself to train," he said.

Only two years ago, McCrea had knee surgery and was told his best running days were likely behind him.

"I did have a lot of fear that I might not finish in the time allotted, which was 12 hours, and I was concerned that my body would give out before I made the finish line. But I never thought about walking off the course," he said.

That's a lesson in life that would seem to apply to everyone.