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Environmental chamber helps towards North Pole marathon success

A daring runner who trained in the extreme cold of Northumbria University's environmental chamber was the top British finisher in the North Pole marathon.

Alan Davison took part in the gruelling 26.2 mile run which sees runners competing on some of the world's toughest terrain in temperatures as low as -40 degrees. He managed to complete the marathon in 6 hours 55 minutes, finishing seventh overall and first among the British competitors

Prior to the race, Alan took part in preparatory tests in Northumbria's state-of-the-art environmental chamber to get an insight in to the rigours of the event. The chamber is able to replicate extreme temperatures – in this case, cold – which helped Alan to determine which equipment he would need to stand the best chance in the race.

“Preparing in Northumbria's environmental chamber definitely gave me an advantage over the other competitors in the field,” said Alan, 52. “They helped determine how I would cope with the conditions – my heart rate, temperature and breathing was monitored throughout, and I was weighed before and after to determine how much body moisture would be absorbed into the clothing.

“The results meant that I had to downsize my upper body clothing, and I purchased thin glove liners for under my mitts to help absorb moisture.”

Dr Martin Barwood, Research Fellow in Northumbria's Department of Sport, Exercise and Rehabilitation, supervised the tests. He explained: “The demands of a marathon in this extreme cold are beyond that of any normal race. Every facet of running is changed and Alan had to deal with that in one of the most inhospitable environments on the planet.

“This made it a tremendous mental as well as physical challenge. We think we helped reduce some of this burden with our preparatory tests. We are delighted to share in this success and look forward to helping those who take on the extreme in future.”

Alan, who is an active athlete and competes in many events, is already looking in to an Ultra Marathon race in the Antarctic next January.

He added “I'd love the opportunity to work with Northumbria again in the future – the facilities in the University are very cutting-edge and world-class so I feel privileged to have been able to work with them.”

Alan ran the race in aid of the Sir Bobby Robson Foundation and Cancer Research UK.

For more information on Northumbria's Sport and Exercise Sciences courses and facilities, [click here](#).

Northumbria is a research-rich, business-focussed, professional university with a global reputation for academic excellence. To find out more about our courses go to www.northumbria.ac.uk

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