

MARATHON MAN MIKE'S CHARITY CHALLENGE

■ Running Man and fundraiser, Mike Searle.
Picture: SIMON WILLIAMS-TULLY

34-miles to raise public's awareness of MS

By JIM BRAKELL

A PERSONAL trainer living near Chester is striding out later this month to raise awareness – and money – for multiple sclerosis.

On Saturday, May 22, Mike Searle is running from Whitechurch to Frodsham in the annual Sandstone Trail Challenge, a gruelling 34-mile cross-country event along the entire route of the trail.

A fully qualified professional personal trainer and sports therapist, Mike's training has included running more than 50 miles each week for several months and runs of up to 24 miles as part of his race preparation.

"The training can get tough through the winter months but most of the hard work is behind me now and I'm looking forward to the event," said Mike, of Mickle Trafford, who has taken part in the event nine times and has won it on three occasions.

Mike, 41, runs Body4life Personal Training at Forest Hills Leisure Club in Frodsham and also trains clients in their own homes.

"One of my personal training clients suffers from multiple sclerosis and I have seen at first hand how debilitating this disease can be," he said.

"Despite having difficulties with balance and coordination, my client has

really benefited from his individually tailored and supervised training programme. We both really enjoy our sessions together and he has already made noticeable improvements in his strength and fitness.

"At the moment there is no cure for MS so I hope that my competing in this challenge will help to raise awareness about the disease."

The challenge, is jointly organised by Cheshire Countryside Management and Cheshire Fire Brigade and covers 34 arduous miles along ploughed fields, trails, towpaths, and roads, starting near Whitechurch and finishing at Frodsham Fire Station.

Focus

Competitors have to carry their supplies, topping up their drinks bottles at each checkpoint along the route. There is a time limit of 12 hours to complete the challenge but although Mike's best time for the event is just over four and a half hours he says that this year the event will have a different focus for him.

"Completing the event is a massive challenge in itself but this year my goal is to raise awareness about multiple sclerosis as well as do my best," he said.

