

## Recreation: Naples' Burgunder tackles Empire State Building

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NAPLES — Part-time Naples resident Richard Burgunder recently completed his fourth Empire State Building Run-Up.

Seeded in the men's elite wave, the professional extreme sports athlete climbed the 86 flights and 1,576 stairs in a personal record of 14 minutes, 46 seconds. The 30-year-old finished the invitation-only New York Road Runners event 61st among 206 runners. He was 16th of 36 in the men's 30 to 39 category.

"After the first time I did it, I just became totally hooked," said Burgunder, who competes in ultra marathons, notably distances of 50 miles or 50 kilometers, nationally and internationally. "It's been such an exhilarating experience."

Burgunder said the seeded entries occupy the first two to three lines at the starting line in the main lobby, which he said is 50 meters from the stairwell the competitors ascend. "The start is the key. You have to get out extremely hard and fast," the 6-foot 185-pound Burgunder said. "It's like a rugby scrum. It's very physical."

Learning from previous tries that the start was the key, he said, "I had my best start ever, actually throwing a couple of stiff arms."

The first 25 flights go by quickly, he said, noting, "You don't even notice because there's so much adrenalin."

But the rest of the climb, which ends on the observation deck, becomes more grueling.

"The wall in this race is probably the 60th floor," he said. "It becomes more of a mental game. The air is really dry. It's really warm. The last 20 to 26 flights are really a killer."

Burgunder said he averages 45 to 100 miles running a week and focuses on core work through dips, pushups and such. "I'm a firm believer of quality versus quantity," he said. "I do my training at a very intense level."

He has been participating in Xterra World Tour events, including December's Trail Run World Championship Half Marathon in Hawaii, where he finished 67th out of 348 entries. He's hoping to compete in at least one Xterra world event this year, perhaps the Italy Championship during May or the Germany Championship in August.

He's trying to get more sponsors to compete in additional extreme sports events, which