



Mount Everest 2016 - Blog No 7: Getting ready

Dear all,

Last week, I was lucky to speak to Jaco twice via Whatsapp Call. The connection was surprisingly clear. The first call was on Wednesday evening when I was having some drinks with colleagues at the Ivy, and the second time was last Friday when I had a full house (a friend from Singapore, my mum, my in-laws and of course the kids). On Wednesday we chatted for almost an hour and he told the whole story of their Mount Lobuche ascent in detail, but he was equally interested in how the business visit from our senior leaders to Sydney had gone. On Friday he shared some stories about their practise climbs from Everest Base Camp (one with an amazing view on the three in a row; Everest, Lhotse and Nuptse) and he told me that most likely they will do the Khumbu Icefalls twice. The first time probably in the next couple of days when they will go up to camp 2 or even to camp 3, and then the second time when they'll make the summit bid. They would leave at 2.00 at night to be out of the falls before 7.00. The idea is to pass the icefalls when they are at their coldest, to minimize chances of movement (and thus avalanches)...

At the moment the Sherpas are fixing the ropes for the higher camps. Apparently there is very little snow on the mountain which is not favourable, and they have had a fair amount of storms at night. The Lhotse Face is icy and has a lot of crevasses, so they are still figuring out what the best plan is. In the meantime they have been practising to climb on the ladders with crampons on (there are around 24 ladders in the Icefalls), danced on ACDC as alternative exercise, had a 'head' party (see the picture of Jaco's Khumbu Icefall helmet) and the Puja, a formal ceremony for all climbers and Sherpas, which he found really impressive. He also mentioned that the temperature at night is -10 degrees.

And in the meantime, in real Jaco-style, he has already arranged a lunch for Mother's Day for his mum and me, and he was of course very anxious to hear whether his favourite soccer club won the cup yesterday (which they did).

He's in real good spirit, oxygen level at 80%, heart rate at 59 at rest and his back is going reasonably OK. He needs to watch how he gets up out of 'bed' and to do his exercises, but he now sometimes even forgets to take his daily painkiller, which is probably a good sign.

Here all OK, we had the "changing of the guards" this weekend. My mum went back to the Netherlands today and my in-laws arrived last Thursday. On Wednesday the girls will go back to school after 2.5 weeks school holidays.

I will drop you all a short note when I know if and when they'll go into the Icefalls.

Regards,
Daan