



**North Pole 2018 - Blog No 4:  
Antibiotics, the flu, too busy..... nervous**

**Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> March**

Formally, it's spring at the northern hemisphere..

Everybody around me is looking forward to temperatures above zero and long days of sunshine whilst I am switching from counting weeks to now counting days, 8 to go! So yes I am getting nervous, but in a good way.

Since I am back from my training adventure in Canada we thought it would be quiet at home, meaning no visitors for a while. Yes, this was a fact (besides one long weekend with Arjen and his family) but what is it with us as a family? It almost feels like we have a gift of finding "to do's" around every corner and on top of that the kids and myself had the flu spread out over a few weeks. But what about the comment, antibiotics? After coughing for 3 weeks I thought it was wise to see the doctor and that Daan was happy with this judgement is an understatement. After 45 minutes, a blood sample and an X-ray the conclusion was that I had a serious throat infection, that exercising would make it worse and that 7 days of antibiotics were required. I can assure you that I nicely used my medicine but did not stop training. These 5 to 6 weeks with medical challenges gave me a flash back to my Everest adventure. Precisely 2 years ago and also 2 months before departure I received the news about my herniated disk. Of course this flu does not even come close to that situation but I was really looking forward to a smooth period full of training.

But let's focus on the positive things. Early this year I came up with an idea related to my company mission of "inspiring one million people to fulfil their dream". Instead of looking for sponsors that invest money in my expedition I have approached a few companies that are willing to think big. With think big I mean in how to reach as many people as possible. For these companies I will give a free motivational talk later in the year and they will have their logo on my expedition jacket. This whole idea gave me from day one a lot of energy but the responses that came from companies like Randstad, UPC and Unilever were even more inspiring. So as we speak I am working on several plans for after my expedition which will probably fill my agenda for a serious amount of time.

Besides the above I also got a lot of energy from my last 2 months of training. It sounds strange but since winter arrived I made some changes in my schedule, meaning less out-door training. "Hold on, why is that?" I hear you think. Very simple for those who know me, my approach has always been, everything I can influence I will influence. The last 2 months the ground in the forest was so hard and slippery that I converted my soccer, running and mountain bike training to 4x a week a couple of hours in the gym. Of course I have still been training outside but that was more like long trails of walking with a 23kg backpack or pulling my 42kg tyre. That last activity always created many looks over people's shoulder when they passed me or long chats with the most relevant question at the start of the conversation, "what the h#@ are you training for?" So I'm slowly getting famous for being a bit crazy I guess. I have to say that the gym activities were far from standard. Half of the time I do my own training but next to that I follow almost every day a class like Pilates, spinning or a circuit training. All these lessons are in Polish which does not mean that I am improving my knowledge related to this language but

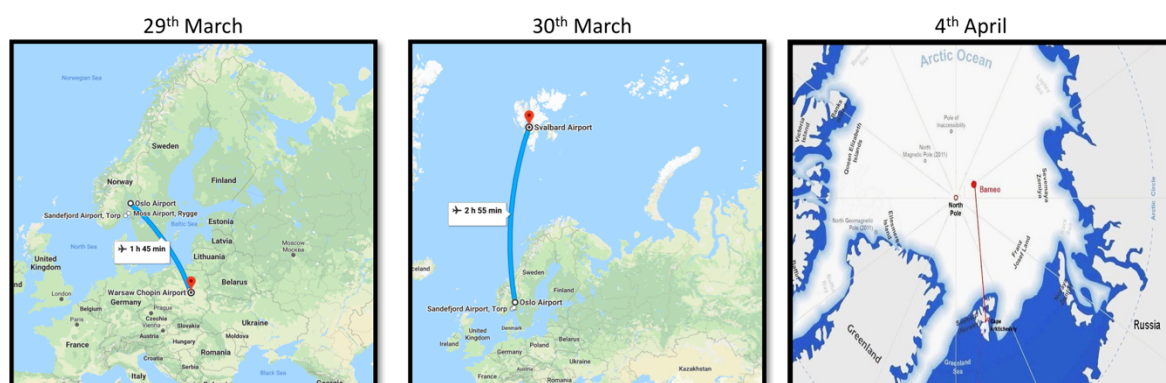
the teachers do their best to help me out or I just copy every move I see people doing next to me. Sometimes I can even see them thinking “why is that guy every time looking at me?” Sorry girls, I am just doing my best to keep up. The good or the bad thing about not being able to understand everything is also related to for example the spinning sessions. Every time when I think she tells me that I need to give full power for the last 10 seconds we continue for another 3 minutes and after that we need to add more resistant because I just misunderstood them. But I have to say I am really happy with the gym that I found close to our house. They have everything I need including a pool for my 100 laps each Tuesday morning.

In this last week it’s all about the detail. I try to explain to people that during an expedition good is not good enough. So your preparation, your material, your training needs to be 100% perfect because the margins of safety and success are very small. My learning so far with the North Pole preparation is that this goes even beyond perfect. Look, let’s be honest, even on Everest you can arrange some new gear in for example Base Camp – not ideal but it is possible. Now I will be dropped on a piece of ice the size of Europe. I need to have everything with me and it needs to work as well. There is just no option of arranging something new. So taking that in mind I checked my gear 20 times and even the smallest gap I have sent to a sewer to fix it. More surprisingly is probably today’s treatment, visiting a beauty salon for a pedicure session, relaxing but again part of preparation as I don’t want to have small irritations on my feet that can cause blisters or even injuries.

I now think it’s time that I stop sharing information about the journey to my expedition and I can imagine that everybody is looking forward to read about the real thing. For that I have to say that I cannot promise long updates but probably more one-liners about how we are making progress. We will send messages via satellite phone to Eric’s office (Eric is the expedition leader) and someone there will update his website. But I am sure that Daan will be capturing this as well, so please make sure that you check your e-mail once in a while if you want to stay updated.

Finally, for now, I would like to share our initial plan for the coming weeks. This is the ideal program with no weather challenges or drifting away from the Pole, because one thing is for sure the plan we will use as a start will not be the plan on day two. Being able to adjust is the key ingredient to success.

Dare to Dream!



Most ideal scenario ;-)

**March 29**

- Fly Warsaw – Oslo

**March 30**

- Fly Oslo - Svalbard - Longyear / Norway

**March 31**

- Acclimatisation

**April 1. Day 1**

- Team dinner

**April 2. Day 2**

- Food pack and equipment fitting (harness, skis)
- Sled pack and ski / camp orientation

**April 3. Day 3**

- Final sled pack and ski
- Transfer loaded sleds to Airport
- Final ice briefing

**April 4. Day 4 - Fly to Barneo**

- Transfer to Airport Board AN-74 fly to Barneo, land at Barneo
- Load equipment onto Helicopter and transfer to 89<sup>th</sup> parallel ski and/or camp

**April 5-12. Day 5 - 12 Expedition**

- 6:30 Wake up 8:30 Leave tent 5:00 Arrive at ice camp 7:00 Dinner 9:00 Sleep

**April 13. Day 13 –**

- Fly to Longyearbyen
- 6:30 Wake up 8:30 Leave tent 5:00 Arrive at ice camp 7:00 Dinner 9:00 Sleep

**April 15-17. Day 15**

- On your own departure



Pulling my 50kg sledge – Camp Barneo, North Pole