

9/10



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UK International K2 Expedition

MEF reference 96/10

Country/Area Pakistan

Name of expedition leaders
Harry Taylor (Leader)
Andy Parkin
Brian Tilley
Maciej Berbeka
Mike Smith
Rick Allen

Address and telephone number of leader
As above

The objective of the expedition was to climb a new route on the east face of K2 in alpine style.

The dates of the expedition were
July 1st - Sept 7th 1996

4623



Technical details of route and maximum height reached.

On the east face a height of 6.200metres was reached .There was a high risk of avalanche.

On the east rib a height of 6.300metres was reached. This is a steep,mixed route and a possible future objective.

Abruzzi - reached 6.500 metres

Basque route - reached 6.400metres .A steep ,mixed route.A good and reasonably safe line which will become the standard route on K2.

Weather conditions.

Prior to our arrival the weather had been very poor i.e heavy snowfalls for over 40 days.No teams had reached above 7,000metres in this period.On the 27th of July during the full moon the weather improved greatly enabling the Italian team to summit on the 29th and the Japanese and Chilean teams to reach the shoulder via the Basque route.The weather remained fine until the 2nd of August during which time we made a sortie on to the east face.From the 2nd to the 12th we experienced rain and snow and during the 13th to the 17th another fine spell arrived allowing the Japanese and Chileans to summit on the 13/14th. The weather then deteriorated with increasing high winds and colder conditions arriving making a summit bid on any route by our team not possible within our time frame.

Any accidents or illnesses involving expedition members or porters.

On the 7th of August Rick Allen and Maciej Berbeka set off at midday on the Abruzzi ridge in a bid to acclimatise.The day time temperatures were very high during early August which necessitated all climbing to be done at night.Unfortunately Allen and Berbeka set off and were avalanched 400metres above the foot of the spur. Allen escaped but Berbeka was carried to the foot of the route and fortunately he remained on the surface.The rest of our team hurried to

the area and after several hours managed to escort Maciej to base camp. He was diagnosed by the Chilean doctor of having a fracture in T5 and T6 part of his spine. Unable to walk or be carried a helicopter rescue was initiated which unfortunately due to bad weather and poor liaison by the L.O took until the 25th August to arrive.

This single incident early on in the expedition did nothing to help our small team's chances of success on the mountain.

I have no doubt that had Maciej not been from strong Polish stock with bones of steel and skin of kevlar he would not be recovering in Zakopane today.

Other relevant comments

Great administrative expense was caused by the Pakistani embassy in Poland denying Maciej's visa to be issued prior to the trip. He was delayed by over one week and had to make his own way to base camp.

The poor communication between Gore army camp and Skardu caused a great delay in the rescue of Maciej. Had any member been suffering from any more serious injury the outcome could be potentially fatal.

Financial details

K2 Budget in US dollars

Administration	2,000
K2 permission for 6 people	10,000
Flights	6,240
Cargo	3,600
Agency fee and expenses	1,500
Team Equipment	1,200
Cook and cook boy	1,200
L.O wages and equipment	2,200

Porters	11,200
86 in and sirdar and assistant	
24 out and sirdar	
Jeeps	800
Hotels	950
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	42,890

Income MEF and BMC	4,050
Polartec Challenge Award	7,000
Team Members	18,000
High Adventure BVI	13,840

NB The cost of helicopter rescue is not included due to no invoice having been received to date. The 4,000 dollar helicopter bond was forfeited and will be claimed on our insurance at a later date.

Summary

The east face of K2 was our initial objective on the mountain. We believe the objective danger to be unacceptable during this summer. Our secondary option, the east rib, proved also to be threatened by avalanche however given good conditions and a fully acclimatised team it could be an objective for the future. The Basque route although steep and committing is a reasonably safe line and we believe it will become the preferred route on the mountain.

A point to note, the Japanese team left camps 1 and 2 on the Basque route stocked with over 100kg of food, tentage, cookers and gas in each camp in durable stay behind bags so the first team to arrive in the '97 season could save themselves some time and effort.