



Global Rescue Mission to Broad Peak in the Himalaya

July 21, 2008

A bunch of new dispatches coming this week from Dave Watson and the K2 Tall Mountain Expedition in Pakistan. The wires have been quiet for a little while following a scary fall and injury to Dan McCann, one of the skiers on the trip. Dan is safe and healing following a rescue pretty high on the mountain by the rest of his teammates. We're wishing safe travel in the mountains for all of them. Here's the July 6th post from Dave on K2TallMountain.com:

On July 3, Linda received a call from Chuck about 11 am EST. "How's it going?" she asked. "Not good," he responded.

They were at base camp and in the middle of a rescue scenario. Dan McCann took a fall on Broad Peak and sustained serious injuries. He fell about 500 m (1,500 ft.) and stopped on one of the few patches of soft snow on the mountain – 50 m (150 ft.) from a 3000 ft. drop off the side of the mountain. Chuck, Dave and Andy managed a high altitude rescue of Dan, lowering him some 3000 ft off the mountain, no small feat, when every snow anchor has to safely sustain a working rescue load. The accident happened around noontime, and they were back in base camp by about 7pm.

There, they were met by a doctor from the Iranian expedition who helped to take care of his injuries. It appears that he has injuries to his arm and ankle and possibly some ribs, lacerations on the face and arms, but no life-threatening injuries. A helicopter airlift was scheduled for the next morning to evacuate Dan to Skardu.

The team was up again after a few hours sleep to prepare the Landing Zone for the helicopter and share some time together while they waited for the helicopter to arrive.

The logistics for the evacuation couldn't have gone any better. He was off the mountain and on his way to more medical help in less than 24 hrs. The Global Rescue Service, with help from Karakorum Magic Mountains, managed to get him on one of the two flights each week (weather permitting) out of Skardu and then the same (or next) day on to Islamabad, where he received more medical assistance at a hospital. The last news was that flights were being arranged back to the states for the following day.

After a day of packing Dan's personal belongings to send out with porters for shipment back to the USA, the team was formulating plans for their next steps. Another day of rest was needed by all, so the plan was to go back up Broad Peak the day after that, weather permitting. They have established an advanced base camp at Camp 1 with the help of the high altitude porter. They will climb toward Camp 2 (6,200 meters) and then return to Camp 1 to spend the night to acclimatize and start to work their way up the mountain. If the mountain doesn't feel right, they will retreat to base camp and move on to K2. If everyone feels strong and the weather cooperates, they will continue the climb on Broad Peak.

At Chuck's request, Linda contacted Brian Block, the fifth team member planning to join up for the K2 portion of the expedition, to inform him of the situation. He expressed his concern for Dan and also confirmed that he will not be joining the team due to exciting work opportunities. At his point, he would have to fly on the 5th of July and return by August 4th for a work commitment, leaving only 12-14 days on K2, which... would be nice for trekking but not realistic for climbing the peak.