



A masked David Cole and James McGuinness ascend the ice fall with Pumori in the background.

It's a long way to the top of the highest mountain

David Cole, three team members and three supporting Sherpas successfully reached the summit of Mount Everest just after 11 am on Wednesday morning and had made the return journey safely to base camp by Saturday.

The jubilant climbers stayed at the top of the world for two hours, finally leaving at 1 pm to start the descent to camp four.

After celebrating with the Sherpa team on Saturday night, team

members were to start packing up camp ready to begin the three day journey back to Kathmandu.

"It was a near 24 hour round trip to the summit in good (warm and windless) conditions, however we are completely exhausted for it," David said on Saturday.

"The summit was not without incident for other unfortunate climbers (on other teams), in which a Swiss climber died, attempting to summit without oxygen, and the rescue of an Omani and Korean climber."

Project Himalaya team leader, Jamie McGuinness marked his fourth summit climb, and played a part in the rescue efforts.

Jamie had never made the climb from the south side before.

David has achieved his goal, to stand on the summit of the highest mountain in the world.

His proud parents, Graham and Dawn, are looking forward to hearing all about their son's feat when they meet up with him in Hong Kong early next month.



David after he negotiated a series of "hair-raising" ladder crossings.



Pasang Gombu leads the way with a huge and heavy load. Photos: David Cole.