



Everest summit within reach

David Cole is hoping to be making an attempt on the summit of Everest today or tomorrow, the team having started the seven day round trip from base camp on Thursday.

"We are all a bit anxious to get moving on the final summit push now that we have rested here at base camp for a few days.

"Given the last few good days of weather, with clear skies and minimal wind, we are going to commence the push for the summit this Friday morning with an anticipated summit day, all going well, around May 21 and 22," David said.

"As it turns out, May 20 will be a full moon and generally weather conditions around this date tend to be favourable, albeit colder, with clearer skies and the possibility of a moonlight night to guide the way to the summit."

David said there are 30 expeditions on Everest this year, with around 270 climbers taking part in a bid to summit.

"The tentative summit date of May 21-22 is exactly that, it's tentative.

"Any variables such as the final dates for fixed lines being put in place above camp four, and especially any changes in the weather conditions over the course of the week could change this schedule around somewhat.

"This for us could mean a bit more sitting around at any one of the higher camps literally on standby, waiting for that best window to go for it."

David said they could sense the excitement of an approaching summit day in the Sherpa team.

"This is their livelihood for which

we have them to thank so gratefully."

He said the Sherpas will be making a number of trips from camp two to four to stock the South Col camp, a barren and often extremely windy camp so all tents need to be well anchored down to prevent them being blown away.

"The Sherpas will bury all supplies — tents, oxygen, food, fuel and stoves — in bags at camp four in preparation for our arrival around May 20.

"From camp three, we will move further up, traverse the Lhotse Face, one gruelling step at a time, to the South Col, which we might expect to take some six to eight hours.

"We will arrive at the South Col late afternoon, and then muster what energy we can, to make it a priority to boil snow to hydrate and cook some simple foods to replenish our bodies of those depleted calories."

David said they plan to rest at the South Col for about six to eight hours and at around 10 pm make their first steps for the summit, some 850 metres above them.

"We will pass over the South summit and climb up the 40 m Hillary Step as the last final crux, and about one hour later, all climbing well and weather remaining on our side, can expect to reach the summit of Everest some 10 hours or so after leaving the South Col."

David said there is typically about a 40 percent success rate of summiting Everest from the south side.

The next time David communicates will be after the summit attempt.