



American Jordan Romero, right, poses with a Sherpa guide on the summit of Mount Everest on Saturday. The 13-year-old still needs to scale Vinson Massif in Antarctica to accomplish his goal of conquering the highest peaks on all seven continents.

PICTURE: AP

Youngest Everest hero's advice is to dream big

BEIJING: For Jordan Romero, the 13-year-old American who became the youngest climber to summit Mount Everest, it all began with the desire to dream big.

The eighth grader from Big Bear, California, said he first came up with the idea to climb the highest peaks on all seven continents four years ago. On Saturday, he reached the top of the world's highest mountain, and nearly completed his quest.

"The record is one thing, but standing on top of the world is just the best feeling you could ever imagine," he said yesterday by satellite phone from 6 500m at the Advanced Base Camp where his team were resting.

Two days earlier, Jordan had succeeded in scaling the 8 850m peak, accompanied by a team that included his father, his father's girlfriend and three Sherpa guides.

Before him, the youngest

climber to scale Everest had been Temba Tsheri, of Nepal, who reached the peak at age 16.

Jordan said he hoped his achievement would encourage young people worldwide to set their own big dreams and pursue them.

"I'm doing this to inspire other kids, hopefully across the world, to get outdoors and set goals in life. I'm doing this to set an example for them," he said.

His success means he

remains just one climb away from his overall goal of reaching the highest peaks on all seven continents. The final peak is the 4 900m Vinson Massif in Antarctica, which he hopes to tackle at the end of the year.

The group, dubbed "Team Jordan", had chosen to climb the technically more difficult northern side of Everest because the Chinese side has no age limits for climbers. The southern approach from Nepal

requires climbers to be at least 16 years old.

The climb had many tough moments, the teen said. At one point, the water bottles froze and the team went without liquids for 10 hours.

The most difficult point came when Jordan developed abdominal cramps on the final ascent.

"But when we approached the summit, it all (cramps) just faded away. I just felt happiness," he said. — Sapa-AP