

# SA's latest Everest team stymied by lack of funds

BY PRISCILLA SINGH

The latest South African team preparing to conquer Mount Everest have met the first stumbling block in their quest to reach the summit of the 8 848m peak.

The team, all members of the Mountain Club of South Africa, desperately need at least R50 000 to ensure that the expedition takes place.

The mountain club has agreed to pay the airfares for team leader Alex Harris and members Mark Campbell, Robin Walshaw, Anton Erasmus and Shaun Disney, who all come from Johannesburg.

Campbell said outdoor specialists ME Stores had pledged R50 000, but more money was needed for "on-the-ground logistics expenses".

"We have to pay for road transport to move the 800kg of equipment, food and tents. There are also road taxes to worry about, hiring yaks and herders, and mountain park fees. We also have to enlist the services of a Tibetan agent who will monitor our conduct on the mountain," said Campbell, adding they did not even have money to hire sherpas.

The team were supposed to have left on August 10, but have extended their departure until the 17th at the very latest so that they have more time to raise the money.

Campbell said the autumn climbing season usually started at the beginning of September and that the team would need time to acclimatise before their climb from the Tibetan side, on the northern face of Everest.

The northern side of Everest was first attempted by George Mallory, who died in his quest to reach the top, but Campbell is confident that - with the team's experience and their Alpine style of climbing (travelling as light-weight as possible) - the South African flag will be planted on the roof of the world.

Interested sponsors can call Campbell on 083-266-2662 or (011) 716-3958, or Harris on (011) 482-7112.