



## **EVEREST SKYDIVE UPDATE**

**RELEASE DATE: 08-07-08**

THE FINAL COUNTDOWN is underway to the world's first Everest Skydive with the planning process on schedule and equipment soon to arrive at High & Wild HQ in the UK.

The management team has now been finalised and project director Nigel Gifford OBE is delighted to welcome world champion skydivers Omar Alhegelan and Greg Gasson, along with Tom Noonan, Tandem Director for Strong Enterprises, the company selected by Everest Skydive to supply their Dual Hawk Tandem System. Tom will be a tandem master, Omar will be a jumpmaster and video cameraman dispatching skydivers and tandem jumpers and Greg will be videoing the skydivers' descents.

The new team members join Andy Elson, aeronaut, cosmonaut and specialist in high altitude life support systems, Dave Wood, responsible for the overall safety of parachuting operations, Ryan Jackson, a trauma doctor in aviation medicine, Ben Wood – jump master and aerial photographer and Ryan Duke, ground communications and acclimatization supervisor.

Nigel says: "Since the first recce in May 2007 and the recent evaluation of the DZ in May 2008, headed up by Dave Wood, all the preparations are now falling into place. The delivery of the oxygen systems is happening at the end of July, the parachuting equipment is due for delivery in August and everything will be shipped to Kathmandu on September 6.

"I am delighted with the progress being made and with the addition of Tom Noonan, Greg Gasson and Omar Alhegelan to the management team – world-class skydivers of enormous experience who will add to that of Dave Wood, director of parachute operations and safety."

In May, Nigel and Dave were part of the team that checked the performance of the solo canopies at the DZ at Syangboche, Nepal, successfully completing two sub-terminal openings and two terminal openings from 17,500ft. Further checks will be made on the tandem canopies, in Switzerland in August, including a series of high altitude tandem jumps. The rigs used will have bigger parachutes than the systems used by the military for similar jumps to ensure landings are easy.

Dave says: "When we're out there, the solo jumpers will do a familiarisation jump from 5-6000ft above the DZ to get them used to the oxygen systems, how they feel and how much you can see. Everyone will be able to try out the systems on the ground. No-one will jump unless the conditions are good and everyone will receive a full and comprehensive briefing.

“I’ve been to 26,500ft with oxygen and full military equipment. I’ve also been to 25,000ft with a military tandem system. The Everest Skydivers are going to experience something completely different from anything they’ve done before.

“When they step outside that aircraft into freefall the first thing they’ll see is five of the world’s biggest mountains. There will be no other skydive like it in the world and they’ll be able to see that awesome scenery very, very clearly because we’re going to make sure the jumping is only undertaken when the weather conditions are perfect.”

The DZ at Syangboche is a 352 metre long grass landing strip which is 29 metres wide at its narrowest point and 50 metres at its widest. It will be specially prepared during the weeks before the trip to ensure all ruts, lumps and bumps are taken care of as this is also where the Pilatus Porter, operated by Swiss Boogie and flown by pilots Ruedi Isenschmid and Henri Schurch, will perform a downhill takeoff prior to the jump - an experience in itself!

Dave says: “Providing we’re not getting a curl-over effect from the wind coming up the valley over the airfield the wind conditions will be considered at the time. I’m not going to put absolute limits on it but we’ll be looking for light winds between 5-8 knots and we’ll judge the safety on the basis of people’s experience and the conditions. The aim is to give everybody the best opportunity to perform to their ability.”

Working with Nigel on the Hazard Analysis Risk Management Plan for Everest Skydive is retired Wing Commander Phil Harrall. An ex-MoD regulator with 34 years experience as a navigator in the Fleet Air Arm, and a further four years with the Royal Air Force, he has developed safety management systems for the military and safety cases for military applications. He recently completed a safety case for the Red Arrows. He also worked with Nigel on the risk management plan for GKN Mission Everest, where paramotors were flown to high altitude in the Everest region.

Nigel says: “I absolutely love putting people in situations where they can achieve their own ambitions and goals. It can change people’s lives.”

Further information will be released at the end of August.

High & Wild



Incredible Adventures is the exclusive US sales agent for High & Wild.

[www.incredible-adventures.com](http://www.incredible-adventures.com)

941-346-2603 or 800-644-7382