

Doing the disk dance on top of the world

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The sound of the vuvuzela reverberated from the highest peak on the African continent at 7:30 this morning (Saturday May 8), when the Team of Hope, reached the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro in Tanzania.

The team, which included two Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma survivors, undertook this climb in order to raise awareness of Lymphoma. These South Africans took along their soccer spirit, and in true South African style, celebrated this victory by kicking a soccer ball (inscribed with messages of hope from other Lymphoma survivors), dancing and blowing the vuvuzela, atop of the highest freestanding mountain in the world.

At 5895 metres above sea level, Kilimanjaro (in Swahili 'the place where God lives') is nearly four kilometers higher than Johannesburg at 1800 metres.

The team consists of captain Robby Kojetin, who became the 17th South African to summit Mount Everest last year, and Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma survivors Ilse-Mari Hanekom (32), known for her appearance on the television show Big Brother and Lionel Greenberg (50) a keen hiker and athlete who has completed both the Comrades and Two Oceans Marathons several times.

The climbers arrived in Tanzania on Sunday, and by Tuesday had completed the first day's hike – which took them to an altitude of 3500 metres, in seven hours.

By Wednesday they were approaching the freezing level at 4850 meters, and by Thursday had scaled the Baranco Wall a steep 270 meter scramble topping out just below the Heim glacier at an altitude of 4100 meters.

Earlier Kojetin reported that spirits were high despite rain, and while nerves were setting in for the summit push no-one was showing signs of altitude sickness.

The last message from Kojetin on Friday read: "All in camp. Leave for summit midnight tonight. Everyone doing well. No incidents. Will call from summit about 7am South African time."

They headed for the top of the continent at midnight last night from Barafu camp.

There were joyous scenes on the top of the mountain when the ball – which was taken around cancer wards in South African hospitals before the climb to be signed by cancer patients and survivors – was kicked around the summit of Mount Kilimanjaro.

For further information visit: www.teamofhope.co.za

Or send messages via the Facebook Group: Team of Hope Kili Climb.

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