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Vanessa O'Brien summits coveted K2 to become first American women to climb the Savage Giant

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On July 28th, at 3:30 PM local time, 52-year-old Vanessa O'Brien made history as she became the first American female to stand on top of the Savage Mountain, "The K2". Vanessa was accompanied by eleven other mountaineers including Icelander John Snorri Sigurjónsson, Chinese – Zhang Liang and Miss Jing Xue and a sturdy team of eight sherpas led by legendary Mingma Gyalje.

This summit marks the culmination of the three-year deadlock on the second highest and arguably one of the most difficult mountains on earth.

The ever more difficult conditions have thwarted previous attempts in the season, successfully confining the neighboring Polish Ski Team to the Base Camp. The poles have been waiting on their toes for a weather window. K2 not only stands as the only 8000er in the world which has never been climbed in the winters but climbing it even in summers has become increasingly difficult.

Vanessa, has been attempting to climb K2 for the consecutive three years, moving higher on the high camps with each proceeding attempt.



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Earlier, after her failed attempt in 2016, Vanessa said, "We made it to camp 2 in 2015 and camp 3 in 2016. So I believe that it might be camp 4 and summit in 2017,"

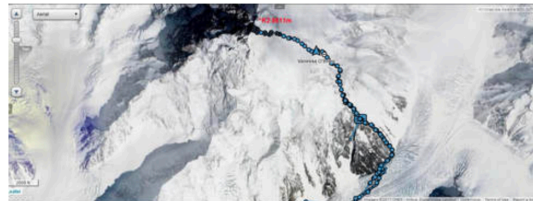


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Keeping it simple and to the book, the team chose the Cessen Route for the climb. An early Monsoon in Pakistan and stupendous snow conditions beyond 7000metres has posed a serious challenge for the team of sherpas who are leading this expedition.

Moving from camp-3 to camp-4 on the shoulder alone consumed an exhausting 12 hours. It is still not clear if the team has been using bottled Oxygen, which in all probability they might be.

The team is now heading down from the 8611m Granite rock and as per the record, K2 is known to be the toughest to climb down. Casualties which occurred in the 100-years long climbing history of the mountain, most of them have happened during descent from the mountain and continues to be so to this date.



Vanessa has been an active social worker and a peace ambassador for Pakistan and has spoken in favor of Pakistan on many fronts.

"Who in this room would have guessed that Pakistan will be Asia's best performing stock market in 2016? It continues to be a country with a low cost of borrowing, stable currency and high growth rates," she said in a presser earlier in the US.

"The flags of the UK, US and Pakistan are all equally important to show friendship, peace and solidarity".



With Pakistani Military and friend Cynthia Ritchie. PC: Haris Bhatti



1-Abruzzi 2-Cessen 3- Kukuczka-Piotrowski courtesy:

Meanwhile, the Polish Ski team, comprising of Andrzej Bargiel , Janusz Gołab and Jakub Poburka have stayed in the Base Camp following unpredictable weather and heavy snow.

The team had earlier chosen the difficult and least attempted Kukuczka-Piotrowski route but have now chosen Cessen (Basque) route for their expedition.

This summit success comes after multiple summits back in 2014 by a Pakistani Expedition and other international climbers. K2 since, had denied access to the top.

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