

# Irish Endurance Athlete Jason Black to Climb the Iconic K2

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*Endurance athlete Jason Black is currently daring to do what only one other Irishman has ever attempted — to summit the second highest mountain in the world, K2. This will be Black's second attempt to summit the mountain.*

Jason Black has always loved to test his physical and mental capabilities through endurance activities, so it is only natural that he would now yearn to conquer one of the most brutal, unforgiving mountains in the world. Upon his arrival to **K2**, Black will be placing a plaque in the mountain's base camp to honour **Gerard (Ger) McDonnell**, who was the first Irishman to ever successfully summit K2. McDonnell died 10 years ago this year, on 2 August 2008, along with 10 other mountaineers, after an avalanche struck them on their descent from K2. Black insists that this plaque will be from all of Ireland to show their support for the brave mountaineer who lost his life that day.



Image: Jason Black

In 2017 alone, Black has competed in the Race Across Italy (an 800km cycling event with 10,000m of climbing), Ironman Barcelona 70.3, The Beast, summited Mt Elbrus (setting a world record mountaineering speed climb in the process), won and set a new record at the Race Around Ireland Ultra Challenge (he cycled 1,100km in 50hrs and 51mins), and the Race Across Texas (a 1,600km cycling event). Suffice to say, Black is no stranger to gruelling tests of endurance. However, Black will be experiencing a whole new kind of beast in the weeks to come.

For decades, K2, standing at a mighty 8,611 metres, has pushed climbers and mountaineers to their limits, mentally, physically and emotionally. Often known as the “savage mountain,” due to its extreme difficulty to ascend, K2 has had only 300 successful summits, but also 77 fatalities. It has the second highest fatality rate of the ‘eight-thousanders’ (the 14 independent mountains in the world that reach more than 8,000 meters above sea-level).

### *K2: 8 Things You Never Knew About the Second Deadliest Mountain in the World*

After many failed attempts in the nineteenth century, the first expedition to succeed in summiting K2 was led on 31 July 1954 by Italian man Ardito Desio, with climbers Lino Lacedelli and Achille Compagnoni. The first woman to summit K2 was Pole Wanda Rutkiewicz on 23 June 1986. With the advances in modern technology and depending on the success and execution of each day’s climbing plan, expeditions on K2 usually take between six to eight weeks.

Black leaves with the McDonnell family’s blessing and Ger’s jumar (a device used for directly ascending a rope). Gertie, McDonnell’s mother, gave Black his climbing jumar as a gift for his K2 climb.

“Mountaineer Ger McDonnell will never be forgotten for his heroic and unselfish actions in the mountains – to climb this year with his jumar in my hand, given to me by his mother, Gertie, is both humbling, trusting and empowering,” Black said in a recent Facebook post.

Black hopes to pay homage to McDonnell by becoming the second Irishman to successfully summit this iconic mountain.