

## Fredrik Ericsson Presumed Dead on K2

Contributed by Erik Lambert  
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The Swedish ski mountaineer Fredrik Ericsson fell more than 3,000 feet today while climbing K2's infamous Bottleneck...

The Swedish ski mountaineer Fredrik Ericsson fell more than 3,000 feet today while climbing K2's infamous Bottleneck with Gerlinde Kaltenbrunner in the Pakistan Karakoram. His lifeless body was spotted 400 meters above and to the side of Camp 3 on the Cesen route; dangerous conditions have prevented recovery.

Ericsson's intent was to ski from the summit--part of his two-year quest to ski the world's three highest peaks: Everest (8848m), K2 (8611m) and Kangchenjunga (8586m).

As reported on August 1, 2010, poor conditions this past week delayed summit opportunities for Ericsson and his team. While forecasts were supposedly encouraging for an August 6 push to the top, six team members stayed at Camp 4 (ca. 8000m), unsure of the weather. They reported heavy wind and poor visibility starting around 11 p.m.--a couple hours before Ericsson, Kaltenbrunner and journalist Trey Cook started from Camp 4 at 1:30 this morning. Cook turned back before the climbers had reached the Bottleneck, returning to the high camp about four hours later.

Sometime between 7 and 8 a.m., Ericsson was climbing the Bottleneck, perhaps setting an anchor, when he lost purchase, slipped and slid past Kaltenbrunner, unable to self-arrest. It is unknown whether he was on belay at the time, or whether rockfall or an avalanche was involved. Russian climber Yura Ermachek, who was descending to Camp 3 from Camp 4, spotted the body and identified the gear as Ericsson's from a distance. Ermachek said avalanche conditions were too dangerous to attempt a recovery. [K2bottleneck.wordpress.com](http://K2bottleneck.wordpress.com), which cited Kaltenbrunner as its source, also said that Ericsson's father "did not want others taking a risk to collect his [son's] body and bury it. Thus it is still where it came to rest."

Kaltenbrunner began descending solo before meeting with climbers Darek Zaluski and Fabrizio Zangrilli, who intercepted her to provide help. They are still en route to Base Camp as "loose terrain, significant rockfall and poor weather" have slowed progress, the blog said. Kaltenbrunner's last update, from Camp 2 at 6 p.m. local time, made note of rockfall and a damaged rope.

Ericsson was an incredibly talented skier, having already descended two 8000-meter peaks--Shishapangma (8012m) in 2004 and Gasherbrum 2 (8035m) in 2005. In 2007, he skied Dhaulagiri (8167m) from 8000 meters; in 2008 he skied Kangchenjunga (8586m) from 7000 meters. Ericsson's grand goal was to ski from the summit of all 14 peaks above 8000

meters.

His quest to ski K2 began in earnest last summer. On that expedition his partner, Italian ski mountaineer Michele Fait, fell and died while skiing from a low camp.

More details will be posted on [backcountrymagazine.com](http://backcountrymagazine.com) as they become available.

Sources: [fredkericsson.com](http://fredkericsson.com), [homeboyski.com](http://homeboyski.com), [explorersweb.com](http://explorersweb.com), [theskichannel.com](http://theskichannel.com), AP, [climbing.about.com](http://climbing.about.com), [dawn.com](http://dawn.com), [k2bottleneck.wordpress.com](http://k2bottleneck.wordpress.com)