

*Nuptse, Southwest Ridge, Attempt.* Hans Kammerlander (Italy) and his only other teammate, Maurizio Lutzenberger, attempted to be the first people ever to reach Nuptse's slightly higher east summit (7804m). But they could manage to go no higher along the southwest ridge that leads to this summit than 6600 meters on October 18 because of deep powder snow already on the mountain and more snow falling. "It's a very nice route for an alpine-style climb," Kammerlander said, adding that he believes the 400-meter rocky summit face he had planned to ascend probably is not difficult, "but nobody knows."

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*Nepalese Himalaya, Peak Bagging and Other Activity in the Post-Monsoon.* This autumn's weather seemed unrelentingly bad for climbing, without the normal break of a couple of weeks of fine days and nights between the end of the monsoon rains/snowfall in late September and the onset of fierce westerly winds in mid-October.

This autumn, success came to some of the men going for all of the 8000ers. A Spanish Basque, Juanito Oyarzabal, summited Manaslu in early October and thereby knocked off his twelfth 8000er; he says he may finish off all of them by 1999. It also came to a South Korean, Park Young-Seok, who reported that he reached two 8000-meter summits this autumn, Cho Oyu in September and Lhotse in October. Since April, Park now claimed an unprecedented total of five 8000-meter summits in only six months (adding these to two others, including Everest, which he had climbed previously), and he is getting ready to go to Manaslu in December. Before Park, Carlos Carsolio was the only person to have summited as many as four 8000ers in one calendar year (1995).

A new pair of peak-baggers suddenly appeared on the scene this autumn with ambitious plans for the fast track. They are two Spanish brothers, Jesus and Jose Antonio Martinez, who set for themselves the goal of summing all the 8000ers without Sherpa helpers or bottled oxygen within a year from the date of their first success. That first was achieved on Dhaulagiri I, which both of them scaled on September 24. They then went to nearby Annapurna I but stopped that climb at 6400 meters on October 15 when a huge avalanche roared down the mountainside. Next they crossed the Nepalese border illegally, and Jesus summited Cho Oyu from the Tibetan side on a Nepalese permit on November 6. In mid-November, they left Kathmandu for Shishapangma in Tibet before going home for Christmas.

Two prominent Italians, Sergio Martini and Fausto De Stefani, have been much slower in scaling their 8000ers, having begun together with K2 in August 1983, and they are not in their 20s like the Martinez Brothers or in their 30s like Park, but are 48 and 55 years old. Now close to completing the job with 12 successes already, Martini still had Everest to climb, De Stefani had not yet summited Kangchenjunga, and neither of them had climbed Lhotse yet.

This season, they came as a two-man team to climb Lhotse by its normal West Face route without artificial oxygen or help from Nepalese Sherpas. They had a one-month struggle to go for the top under unhappy conditions ("much wind, much snow, no satisfaction," as Martini described it). But at last, on October 15, they reported, they had gained the summit. Or to be more precise, they elaborated, they had been so very near the top that they considered they could rightfully claim a successful ascent. They were unable to say exactly how near they had gotten because wind was blowing snow in their faces and they were in mist at the time, but they decided they were as close as they could possibly get to the summit without being blown away by the fierce wind.

"For me and my friend, we feel that we reached very, very near the summit," Martini said when they came back to Kathmandu. "We are convinced that with the bad weather and with-