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## Going where few have gone before - with GPS

### PAUL LEGALL

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A group of Hamilton adventurers has embarked on an epic journey to one of the most desolate and inhospitable places on Earth, the South Pole. The same men travelled to the other end of the world two years ago, reaching the North Pole after a two-week trek. Paul Legall sets the stage for the current trip while Jon Wells recounts the journey to the North Pole.

\* FOR INTERACTIVE content, including an updated route map and features on equipment, food, personnel and the project, go to [thespec.com](http://thespec.com) and click on Journey to the South Pole.

A team of local adventurers will be packing some modern gadgetry as they retrace the footsteps the bold old-time explorers who walked off the map to reach the South Pole almost 100 years ago.

The four-man team and their American outfitter will be using a global positioning system as they follow the last leg of the route the English explorer Robert Scott pioneered when he reached the bottom of the world in January 1912.

They'll also be carrying satellite phones, computers, iPods and solar panels to recharge their batteries. No matter how bad it gets, they'll never be lost or lose contact with the outside world after being deposited on the polar plateau.

Their outfitter, Doug Stoup, 43, of California, will provide them with the best survival equipment available for the most extreme conditions on Earth, including tents that can withstand winds of up to 160 km/h.

But devices alone won't guarantee success if they're not physically and mentally ready for what's effectively an ultramarathon with no place to drop out.

During the two-week trek, Peter Turkstra, Steve Stipsits, Fred Losani and Mark MacLennan will be dragging their sleds and 55-kilogram loads for up to 10 hours a day through the harshest environment in the world.

At 10,000 feet above sea level, they'll be gasping for breath as they battle high winds and extreme cold.

"I think the biggest concern is the altitude," said Turkstra, 43, of Hamilton. "We all prepared properly to the best extent that we could.

"We trained, trained and trained to be properly prepared."

They all hired personal trainers to help improve their stamina and overall core strength.

Turkstra said of Stoup, who has been to the North and South Poles almost 20 times: "He's not our Sherpa ... He's there to make sure we have the total experience. He's there to keep us safe and advise and assist us."

They'll burn up 8,000 to 11,000 calories a day, about the same as a cyclist in the Tour de France, and can expect to lose from four to nine kilograms during the trip. With no junk food outlets, Turkstra said, it'll be almost impossible for them to consume more than 6,000 calories of food a day. There won't be any prolonged meal breaks, and they'll be eating foods -- such as trail mix and soup -- on the fly.

Paul Hubner, 47, who manufactures polar boots in Stoney Creek, is probably the only person in the world to have skied to the North Pole and South Pole in the same season.

When he reached the South Pole, he met Mexican tourists on a "Champagne flight" to the Pole.

He's encountered a sheik from Dubai who arrived by snowmobile train with his private car and chef. The sheik was wearing his very own Baffin boots under his flowing white robes and down parka.

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