

Mixed results in Everest ascent without oxygen

Adventure photojournalist Cory Richards on May 24 made his first successful ascent of Mt. Everest without the use of supplemental oxygen.

Everest veteran and founder of Lake Tahoe-based Alpenglow Expeditions, Adrian Ballinger, turned back at 8,480 meters earlier in the day.

Less than 3 percent of climbers make it to the top without oxygen.

The duo's Snapchat account grew a following of several hundred thousand views per day.

"This experience has been extraordinary," Richards, who was National Geographic's 2012 Adventurer of the Year, said. "Emotion overwhelms me as I look at the path the last five years has led me down – or up, rather – and to be able to share that journey with the world, I'm humbled and very grateful. I owe immeasurable gratitude to Adrian without whom this journey would not have been possible."

Ballinger has summited Mount Everest a previous six times, but this particular trek was his first attempt at a summit on the North side, from China.

"There are times on the mountain at this altitude that your body just says, 'enough'. And you have to listen. I am so grateful I was able to make that call for myself with help from our extraordinary support team, led by Dr. Monica Piris and Palden Namgye Sherpa, and hours later, we were able to celebrate my partner Cory's summit," Ballinger said.

National Geographic reported that the death rate for those

climbing without oxygen above 26,000 feet is at least five times higher. Four people have died this month on Everest.

– *Lake Tahoe News staff report*