



14 May 2023

Mountain Club of South Africa

ATT: National Committee

Re: National Ice Climbing Meet – Sani Pass

Dear Paul,

By way of introduction, my name is Phillip Kent and I'm the Climbing Convenor for MCSA Magaliesberg. I am assisting Mr Neil Margetts in convening a national ice climbing meet in Sani Pass. Please see the meet details below. We would appreciate the details being circulated nationally.

Date: 21-25 July 2023 (or longer, if anybody has the time)

Leader: Neil Margetts

Location: [Sani Pass](#)

Attendee Limit: **30** (8 experienced ice climbers, 12 experienced trad climbers, 10 beginners)

The annual national ice meet for 2023 will be hosted at Sani Pass. With three locations of varying difficulty, this location has something for everyone. Accommodation will be at the top of the pass in either Sani Top hotel, Sani Top Backpacker, Sani Stone Lodge, or camping. There is self-catering or restaurant/pub at the hotel. Numbers are limited to experience levels. Space will be reserved on confirmation of payment for accommodation. Please specify your experience level when booking.

A comprehensive list of what to bring will be sent on confirmation of the booking.

A valid and current passport will also be required for this meet.

Please RSVP to: info@saclimbingacademy.co.za

In your RSPV please indicate the following:

1. Your amount of sport rock climbing experience, number of years, highest grade led.
2. Your amount of trad rock climbing experience, number of years, highest grade led, biggest climb climbed.
3. Your amount of ice/alpine climbing experience, number of trips, highest grade led, big routes climbed.
4. Your preference for accommodation – Hotel/backpacker/camping
5. Do you have or have access to a reliable 4 x 4 vehicle?
6. Section of the club



FULL DETAILS:

A 4x4 is needed to get up the pass – if you have one available. If one has the extra time, one could use a normal car by approaching from the Lesotho by linking the trip to a tour of Lesotho a few days before or after the meet – most of the main roads in Lesotho are tar and in fair condition. One could approach Sani Top from the back via the AfriSki road in a normal car, provided there has not been a lot of snow and the roads are not iced up. Another option is drive to the bottom of the pass and hike up the road, or take a shuttle up.

We will limit it to 30 people in the following categories. These three types of slots will be filled on a first-come basis, and for example, once the beginner slot is full, then it is full and only spaces in the other categories will be available. When booking to go on the meet, the space will only be reserved after the money for the accommodation booking has been reserved. First preference will be to paid up MCSA members.

- 8 with a lot of trad and some ice experience
- 12 with trad but no ice experience
- 10 beginners.

We have 3 locations:

Black Saturn Couloir WI4, 5 pitches—This is about 20 min tar road drive into Lesotho, and about 45 min walk from the car. It is a series of ice falls in a shallow gulley. Although it is WI4, the top of each section is approachable on foot to set up top ropes and there are other sections lower down that are WI2 and 3. So this is an ideal learning and beginners location where one is in a safe environment and not committed to the route. Sport climbers would be able to try this. As each ice fall is some distance from the other we could have up to 3 teams of 4 to 6 people climbing here on the same day.

Cool Bananas and Banana Split WI3, 4 pitches – This is on the escarpment edge, about 1h walk from Sani Top Backpackers. This is a relatively easy climbing with a short section of steep ice. One can organise intermediate climbers on this who have been **LEADING** trad a fair amount, say 20 days experience. There is some commitment as you abseil down and have to top out. We can accommodate up to two parties of 4 on this line with some top roping the Banana Split and others doing the full climb from the bottom. Care must be taken to organise times so they are not above each other to minimise injury due to ice and rock fall.

French Wench WI4 3 pitches – This more committing and not-so-easy line, which is suitable for those who have some **LEADING** ice climbing experience and a lot of **LEADING** trad climbing experience at a fair grade of 18 and over.

There may be more options out there, so exploring is also on the cards.

Hiking as an alternative to Ice Climbing on other days: – from the lodge, it is possible to summit Thabana Ntlenyana (the highest point in Southern Africa) and back in a day, although a big day. There are also some significant peaks from Black Mountain Pass and other peaks south of the lodge worth climbing. Drive into Lesotho to visit some villages for a cultural experience is also a fun rest day/bad weather day alternative (road condition dependent).



MCSA
THE MOUNTAIN CLUB OF SOUTH AFRICA
MAGALIESBERG

**The Mountain Club of South Africa
Magaliesberg Section**

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MCSA Founded 1891 • Magaliesberg Section Est.1968

SA Outdoor Academy, High Peak and MCSA have gear to loan/rent such as ice boots, crampons, ice axes, Ice Screws etc. We will put out a list of what we have and people book it on a first come basis. It is required that you bring your own personal gear, harness, helmet etc. Also gloves and jacket for snow and cold. A comprehensive list of what to bring will be sent on confirmation of the booking.

Kindest regards,

Phillip Kent
Convenor: Climbing – MCSA Magaliesberg