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# SA teen set for extreme adventure

July 12 2011 at 10:02am By KOWTHAR SOLOMONS

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A 19-year-old Capetonian has been selected to join renowned South African explorer Mike Horn on an expedition to the Arctic Circle.

Henko Roukema, of Durbanville, is one of eight youths from all over the world to join Horn on his next expedition to the Arctic region of Nunavut, in Canada.

The trip is part of the Pan Global Adventure for Environmental Action (Pangaea) Young Explorer Programme.

Part of a four-year project by Horn to educate young people, it allows them to act as environmental ambassadors by taking their experiences of different places and cultures back to their respective countries.

Roukema will traverse the frozen Arctic before spending some time among Inuit people, learning their customs and seeing how they've been affected by global warming. He said he was extremely honoured to be part of the expedition.

"I'm excited to be joining Mike Horn on his yacht, the Pangaea. We'll sail around Baffin Island and through the North West Passage. This route has been a magnet to so many great explorers of the world and I feel privileged to get the chance of experiencing it."

Another South African, Mikayla Bader of Pretoria, will also join the expedition.

Roukema, a maritime navigation student at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, applied for the explorer programme last year and was surprised when he was chosen to do a selection test.

The test pitted Roukema and his eight-man team against another team in a gruelling 30-hour trip through the Swiss Alps, covering 90km and climbing 6 000m in the process.

Roukema's team finished the expedition within the time limit. The other didn't make it.

Before he meets the Inuits, Roukema will have to get used to sub-zero temperatures, sleep on portaledges on a mountain face and practise stand-up paddling to cross partially frozen waters.

Roukema is now preparing for the expedition with a stamina-building routine of running, cycling and swimming.

"I run about 10km to 15km every second day and I swim a few kilometres at least three times a week. I do all my exercises with an 18kg backpack to get me used to the conditions in the Arctic," Roukema said.

He will leave for Nunavut in mid-August to join Horn and the rest of the team for the expedition. - Sunday Argus

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TOUGH MISSION: Henko Roukema of Durbanville will join South African explorer Mike Horn on an expedition to the Arctic region of Nunavut, Canada. Picture: Cindy waxa

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