



AAC Publications

Puscanturpa Este, Poco Loco

Peru, Cordillera Huayhuash

Inspired by Pavle Kozjek's climb Stonehenge on the northeast buttress in 2007 [AAJ 2008], we were eager to climb a new line on this stunning 5,410m peak. On July 13, Saskia van der Smeede, Elly van der Plas, Vincent van Beek, Bas Visscher, and I flew into Lima. From here, we decided not to go to Huaraz, but instead to Cajatambo, a small mountain village located south of the Cordillera Huayhuash. This saved us several days of hiking, and with only a two-day trek we reached our base camp, just beneath the south face of the mountain.

After climbing a few easy 5,000m peaks near our camp, we completed our last acclimatization climb, Cuyoc (5,550m), also called Puscanturpa Sur. We found a nice line through the east face that wasn't hard (UIAA IV+), with good rock. Because of the many possibilities on this face, it could be a first ascent.

We originally planned to climb the east face of Puscanturpa Este, but on the first try we were stopped by terrible snow conditions. Steep sugar snow prevented us from reaching the bottom of the face. Walking around the mountain, we saw the imposing north face. We hadn't seen this face before in pictures, so we were happily surprised and decided to give it a try. A few days later, we started climbing. The first 100m were overhanging columns without any cracks, so we climbed the first pitch of the Slovenian route on the northeast spur and traversed into the north face on the second pitch. Halfway up the face, the wind began to blow so hard that, combined with heavy snow, we decided to bail.

On July 30, we returned for a second try. We found the same brutal wind, and Saskia and Elly were so cold that they turned back. Visscher, Beek, and I kept going and climbed the steep columns with our cold hands. After an easy traverse, we found a way through the second overhanging section and entered more easy terrain. Above some loose and broken rock, we tried to climb a direct line to the summit. However, after two steep pitches (UIAA VI+) we were stopped by a blank wall and were forced to traverse left to the ridge. This ridge was so broken that we were scared to ascend it, but after a few minutes of consideration we decided to go on and soon arrived on the summit.

Because of the many sections of loose rock, we called the route Poco Loco (TD, UIAA VI+). It is likely the third ascent of the mountain and the first route on the north face. Three days later, the weather improved and Elly and Saskia also climbed the face in 16 hours round-trip.

Images



On the upper ridge.

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