



AAC Publications

Broken Tooth, west ridge, Haeussler-Rowe variation

Alaska, Coffee Glacier

On May 31, Peter Haeussler and I, both from Anchorage, reached the summit of Broken Tooth (9,050') via a major variation to the west ridge route (Bauman-Lewis, AAJ 1988). [Cody Arnold, Peter Haeussler, and Jay Rowe first completed the lower part of this variation in 2009 (AAJ 2010); however, they were forced down from their bivy site due to a large storm and were unable to complete the climb to the summit by the west ridge.]

Starting on May 30, we climbed three long ice pitches (WI4+ M6+) in the left of two parallel ice chimneys on a buttress approximately 200m north of the original route. The crux came on the third pitch, where warm temperatures had turned the ice to slush and I took a 20' leader fall. Above the chimney, we climbed three pitches of 60–70° snow with mixed rock and ice sections. (A considerable wet avalanche released on this slope while I followed Peter. Thankfully, I was roped.) This led to the crest of the west ridge, where we excavated a tent site and slept for five hours before continuing to the summit via the ridge.

From our bivy, we avoided a rock step by climbing out onto the north face, where good alpine ice led to the final obstacle, a 60m rock tower. This was overcome by a short 5.9 section, followed by the best pitch of the entire climb: a steep, shoulder-width runnel of ice in a left-facing corner. Above that we climbed to the summit in four low-angle pitches on kitty-litter granite. The round trip back to our bivy took 23 hours, with warm temperatures and deep, wet snow persisting. Back at our bivy, we waited 12 hours for cooler temperatures before finishing the descent.

This ascent of Broken Tooth represents the completion of a longstanding project for me. My first attempt on Broken Tooth was in 1993, and was then followed by 10 additional attempts over the next 20 years. I had tried this mountain from every aspect and been turned back by everything imaginable, but this time the pieces fell into place.

Jay Rowe

Images



View of the west ridge of the Broken Tooth showing (1) the west ridge route by Bauman and Lewis and (2) the new variation by Rowe and Haeussler. The bivy site is marked where the two routes join. Not shown: the south face (Stump-Quinlan, AAJ 1988); the southeast ridge (Haire-Plumb, AAJ 1983); the east face (Root Canal, Walsh-Westman, AAJ 2007, not to summit); the northwest face (Before the Dawn, Ichimura-Satoh-Yamada, AAJ 2007). Numerous other attempts have been made on various aspects.



Peter Haeussler on the summit dish.



Looking up the west ridge of Broken Tooth.



Jay Rowe leading a steep ice runnel on the second pitch.



Jay Rowe skiing below the clean and steep south face of Broken Tooth.

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