



AAC Publications

Mt. Hooker, Northeast Face, Gambling in the Winds

Wyoming, Wind River Range

I cracked open a PBR tallboy. Before me was a massive pile of food, climbing gear, camping equipment, four bottles of whisky, herbal assistance, and a 40-pound Costco freezer bag full of baby-back ribs, steaks, and bacon. “This should be an enjoyable camping experience,” I thought, smirking. It was August 8, and Jesse Huey, Whit Magro, Mike Pennings, and I were about to spend ten days climbing on Mt. Hooker.

Jesse and Mike had an incredible trip, completing a free ascent of the Jaded Lady and the second free ascent of Hook, Line, and Sinker (AAJ 2015), while Whit and I put our efforts into climbing a new line. We spent six days climbing ground-up to establish our line, employing the use of fixed ropes. On the seventh day, we climbed the route in a single push to the summit, completely free. Nothing like a 9-to-5 workweek in the backcountry! The climbing was truly stunning and incredibly varied. Some sections seemed like they would be 5.13 but ended up only being 5.11 or easy 5.12.

Our route starts on the obvious “ski track” cracks that trend right toward two large, green, marbled slabs on the northeast face left of the Hook, Line, and Sinker route. From the top of the first marbled slab we climbed a wild 5.12 roof pitch that we dubbed the Rifle Pitch. This ends at a good ledge, and the crux 5.12 pitch is next, the Good Hand Pitch. A third 5.12 pitch leads through the second marbled slab to another nice ledge. Two more 5.11-ish pitches led us to Der Minor Ledge, at which point we traversed right and then finished on the top section of the Boissoneault-Larson (VI 5.11 A4, 1979).

We call our new route Gambling in the Winds (10 pitches, VI 5.12). A direct finish would be a spectacular way to end the route and would probably add at least one more 5.12 pitch. All the belays are bolted, and it’s possible to rappel from the top of the sixth pitch with two 70m ropes. A 70m rope is mandatory on this route due to the length of several pitches.

The Wind Rivers have the feel of a wild, untamed place in a faraway land, only heard in whispers. Let’s try our best to keep it that way—respect.

– Hayden Kennedy

Images



A composite image of Mt. Hooker. Gambling in the Winds takes a line left of the "nose" feature.

Article Details

Author	Hayden Kennedy
Publication	AAJ
Volume	58
Issue	90
Page	0
Copyright Date	2016
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions