



AAC Publications

Hallett Peak, Fourth Buttress

Colorado, Front Range, Rocky Mountain National Park

Just to the right of the Third Buttress of Hallett Peak and the nasty descent gully for Hallett's western routes, a prominent fin leads to the headwall of Point 12,308'. No route had been published on this formation, which is shorter than Hallett's popular north-facing climbs.

Mark Jenkins and I approached the fin on August 21, scrambled a couple of hundred feet, and roped up directly beneath the steep north-facing prow. We climbed three pitches straight up the prow, the second of which was marginally protected 5.8, followed by a very enjoyable traverse along the narrow, multi-spined ridgeline. After downclimbing into a sunny bowl, we rejoined the crest and scrambled along it, with a bit of hand-traversing on the knife-edge, to reach ledges beneath a prominent crack on the right side of Point 12,308's steep headwall. I estimated this crack to be 50' tall; Mark thought 120'. It turned out to be 150' of dead-vertical 5.9 jamming and stemming—one of the finer crack pitches in the Park, marred only by a worrying refrigerator-size block that can't be avoided. We topped out on flat tundra after four roped pitches plus several hundred feet of fourth- and low fifth-class scrambling. The steep final pitch could be avoided easily by scrambling gullies to the right; there also are harder-looking crack systems, to the right and left, on the same splendid headwall.

Later we heard from Dale Remsberg, a Colorado-based IFMGA guide, that he had climbed this same fin with guides in training some years earlier, though he didn't recall the exact line; they may have followed an obvious crack system on the lower section, to the right of the prow we climbed directly. Regardless of who climbed what first, this is a very fine, Chamonix-style rock ridge that deserves to be done more often. We called it the Fourth Buttress (750', 5.9 PG-13).

– Dougald MacDonald

Images



The line followed in August 2016 on the Fourth Buttress of Hallett Peak, leading directly to Point 12,308'.

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