



## **Arjuna North, Southwest Face, Attempt**

India, Kishtwar Himalaya

**In September, Josie McKee, Caro North, and I traveled to the Kijai Nala (valley) with the intention of climbing the west face of Arjuna (6,230m).** We spent 28 days in the mountains and encountered mostly bad weather and difficult conditions.

After nearly losing a bag of vital climbing gear dropped over a cliff by porters into the Chenab River during the approach, we continued trekking up the Kijai Nala for three more days until reaching base camp at 4,000m on September 3. We then spent two weeks searching for a way through the icefall, sitting out bad weather, and shuttling gear to a cave below the upper icefall, before receiving a forecast for four days of good weather.

Since the weather had been so poor, we hadn't been able to move our gear to the base of the peak before our attempt, nor scope a line. After deliberation, we decided Arjuna was not possible for us to climb in its current condition and with the forecast we had been given, so we set our sights on a lower rock peak just to the north (unofficially Arjuna North). There was a line on the southwest aspect that would allow us to climb more in the sun.

In the early hours of the 19th we started up a couloir at 4,900m and soon reached the base of the rock. Our packs were heavy with supplies for three days, but the terrain was relatively moderate. We

moved efficiently and climbed seven long pitches, encountering terrain up to 5.10-. There was some rock of incredible quality, the face peppered with solid black knobs. Just before dark, we reached a good place to dig out a tent platform at around 5,450m.

The next day our climbing slowed as the terrain became more complex, forcing us to switch between boots and climbing shoes. After five more pitches, an unexpected snowstorm came in from the west, forcing us to start rappelling. A few stuck ropes and many hours later, we made it back to our camp at 5,450m, where we spent a second night. We finished the rappels on the third day. Knowing that a bigger storm was supposed to come in 24 hours, we descended the icefall all the way back to base camp. The next day a foot of snow fell, ending any possibilities for more climbing.

– Whitney Clark, AAC

## Images



Arjuna North from the southwest showing the line of the 2018 attempt



Traversing on the lower section of the southwest face of Arjuna North.



Whitney Clark and Caro North on the southwest face of Arjuna North during an attempt on this virgin summit.



Low on the southwest face of Arjuna North, with the Kijai Glacier below.

## Article Details

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