



AAC Publications

Korona, First Tower, North Pillar, Sport Marathon

Kyrgyzstan, Tien Shan, Ala Archa

In the summer of 2018, Dmitriy Pavlenko (Russia) soloed a new, independent route on the First Tower of Korona (4,810m). He had made a previous attempt on this line in the summer of 2016, stopping halfway up the route. A second attempt, in the winter of 2017, got no further than the glacier in temperatures down to -30°C.

On July 9, 2018, Pavlenko began a third attempt, reaching the bottom of the face with skis and then climbing 11 rope lengths of snow and ice in the approach couloir to reach the start of the pillar. The previous three days of fine weather had left the rock in good condition, and the first couple of pitches (IV/V) went without incident. After overcoming two more pitches at Russian VI A2, Pavlenko set up a single-point hammock for a bivouac.

Next day the wall became more difficult and he progressed at “turtle speed.” Pitch five was the crux (VI A3), involving several roofs and some difficulty in getting solid protection. At the top of pitch six (VI A2), he was surprised to find the summit ridge just above. This was providential, as a thunderstorm was now threatening. The last pitch (V) was still steep and involved large loose blocks. The storm caught Pavlenko partway down the 3A descent couloir, where he found it difficult to move down through the slushy snow.

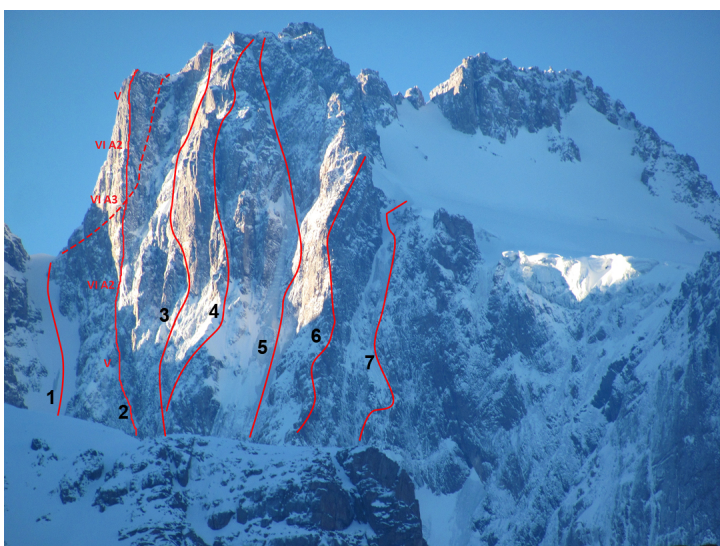
Pavlenko named his route Sport Marathon (900–950m total length, 400–450m for the rock section, 18 pitches in total, Russian 5B VI A3). Because Pavlenko has soloed all the other 5B routes on this face, he can say with some conviction that this new route is the hardest. It is also the steepest route on the north face of Korona’s First Tower.

– Information provided by **Elena Dmitrenko**, Russia

Images



The north face of Korona (4,810m). The 2018 Pavlenko route ascends the left buttress of the high rock tower.



Routes on the north side of Korona I (4,810m; only the top sections of these routes are visible). (1) Unnamed (4A, 1989). (2) Sport Marathon (5B, 2018). (3) Pavlenko (5B, 2009). (4) Koroliev (5B, 1980). (5) Plotnikov (5B, 1995). (6) Smirnov (5B, 1962). (7) Ruchkin (5A, 2000).

Article Details

Author	Lindsay Griffin
Publication	AAJ
Volume	62
Issue	94
Page	0
Copyright Date	2020
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions