



## AAC Publications

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### **First Ascents on the Dukes, Taku Tower, and Mendenhall Towers**

Alaska, Coast Mountains, Juneau Icefield

**Brette Harrington made two trips to the Juneau Icefield in June 2018, first with Caro North and then Gabe Hayden. The following is a summary of their new routes and some climbing history on each formation.**

**South Duke, Northeast Face.** Harrington and North climbed the first route up this face on June 2 (500m, 5.10b M5+ 85°). Mixed terrain with difficult protection and loose blocks gained a steep snow couloir angling left to a headwall with two rock pitches (5.10b).

This formation was first climbed, presumably via the easier southeast side, in a solo ascent in 1965 by Edward Jack Miller. In 2014, John Kelley and Kris Williams climbed Bo Duke-It (1,300', IV WI5 M6+) on the west face of the north summit. Kelley soloed a new route (5.9 WI3) on the south face in 2017. Kelley also climbed North Duke twice in 2014 (possibly the first ascent of the formation), by the north ridge and the south ridge.

**North Taku Tower, South Face.** Harrington and North climbed a five-pitch route (5.10+) on the left side of this face (route 1 in the photo below) in early June. Harrington returned with Hayden and did two longer routes up buttresses farther right: Solarsphere (route 2, 360m, 5.12a) and Sweet & Spicy (route 3, 360m, 5.11c).

This formation was first climbed in 1949 (Forbes-Merritt-Schoeblen) by the west ridge (1,200', 5.5), the ridgeline above these climbs. Earlier ascents on the south face of the west ridge of North Taku include Dancing Bear (6 pitches, 6b) by Christoph Hainz and Roger Scháli, climbed in 2008, and attempts by an American pair on two routes in 2014, one going up the major break between the Harrington-North and Solarsphere and one farther left. In 2000, Stefan Ricci and Michael Wolf climbed the Magic Line (IV 5.9 A1) up the south face.

**Fourth Tower, Mendenhall Towers, South Face.** Harrington and Hayden climbed a new route on the right side of the southern prow, starting with slabs to reach a prominent corner system and finishing with 150m of steep crack climbing (5.11b). The first ascent of the Fourth Tower was in 1972 (Benedict-Greenough-Greenough-McKibbon) by a winding route on the south face. In 2009, Blake Herrington and Jason Nelson climbed the south-facing prow leading directly to the summit: Resignation Arête (12 pitches, 5.11+).

## Images



The Harrington-North route (500m, 5.10b M5+ 85°) on the northeast face of South Duke.



The south face of the west ridge of North Taku, showing (1) Harrington-North (5 pitches, 5.10+), (2) Solarsphere (Harrington-North, 360m, 5.12a), and (3) Sweet & Spicy (Harrington-Hayden, 360m, 5.11c).

## Article Details

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