



El Salto, Ibiza Wall, The Ibiza Club Weapon

México, Nuevo León

Sam Tucker working his way up a fin feature on the four pitch of the Ibiza Club Weapon (250m, 5.14b).
Photo by Edwin Teran

Google Maps shows an impressive blue line when displaying the route from Calgary, Alberta, to El Salto in La Ciénaga de González, Mexico. We traced it south for five days, but not without dilemma: a new radiator in Salt Lake City, cracked suspension coils somewhere on the outskirts of Monterrey, and at least a dozen jugs of coolant along the way. It was unfortunate but manageable until we got in a car accident on the way into town from El Salto to buy groceries, resulting in a totaled van. Our original objective of climbing a new route on La Popa, farther north, was no longer in the cards.

Being that we were now stuck in Ciénaga de González, we refocused our attention on the adjacent canyon of El Salto. We walked the riverbed and approached walls that showed potential. One very steep north-facing wall had impressive streaks, tufa features, and seemingly good stone. After speaking with local route developers, we determined that our chosen wall had yet to be climbed.

On December 12, our team of five (all from Calgary)—Luke Dean, Nathan Hart, Tyson Martino, Ethan Somji, and I—placed the first bolt on the Ibiza Club Weapon. The route was bolted on lead. Some bolts were placed from stances, but, given the consistent difficulty of the climbing, most of our upward progress was by aid tactics. Each pitch was cleaned thoroughly on rappel while the next pitch went up. The two portaledges that we brought were a nice mitigation for bruised hips and raw skin. We finished equipping the seven-pitch line on Christmas Eve.

It wasn't apparent in the bolting stages how difficult and stacked our line would be. Now, most of my time went into projecting the crux fifth pitch—I knew that with limited time I needed to be sure of that pitch.

On January 22 and 23, Luke Dean and I went back up to send the Ibiza Club Weapon. On the first day, I led pitches one through four clean, and then we spent the night in a portaledge. The next day I finished the route, leading every pitch, including the 5.14b crux. Having not rehearsed the last two pitches before my ground-up push, I fell off pitch seven on the last move below the anchor (the only time I fell during my redpoint) and lowered to the belay. After a short rest, I climbed the pitch clean. The breakdown of the route is: 13b, 13b, 12b, 13d, 14b, 12b, 13a, and it's approximately 250m.

There is potential for more lines or a variation of our line on the Ibiza Wall. The rock quality on either side of our route on the lower three pitches is less than ideal, but could be bolted and climbed with enough cleaning. The quality improves greatly on the top half of the cliff and could likely be home to similarly difficult testpieces.

– Sam Tucker, Canada

Images



Sam Tucker working his way up a fin feature on the four pitch of the Ibiza Club Weapon (250m, 5.14b).



Sam Tucker about to enter the long and technical face crux of pitch four (5.13d) of the Ibiza Club Weapon, a 250m 5.14b route in El Salto.



Sam Tucker pacing quickly through the first few bolts of the crux fifth pitch of the Ibiza Club Weapon (250m, 5.14b) in El Salto.



The line of the Ibiza Club Weapon (250m, 5.14b) in El Salto.

Article Details

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|----------------|------------------------|
| Author | Sam Tucker |
| Publication | AAJ |
| Volume | 62 |
| Issue | 94 |
| Page | |
| Copyright Date | 2020 |
| Article Type | Climbs and expeditions |