



AAC Publications

Pongos Norte, South Face (Not to Summit)

Peru, Cordillera Blanca

On July 3, David Mateo (Spain), Beto Pinto (Perú), and I climbed a possible new route on the snowy southern face of Pongos Norte (5,680m), reaching a western subsummit. Although the main summit was first reached by its north face in 1964 and has been climbed at least a few times since, we believe this face remained unclimbed. [Editor's note: The climbers referred to Pongos Norte as Jatunllacsha, but these are separate peaks, with Jatunllacsha being the 5,646m peak just to the east. The latter was first climbed by Germans in 1971 (see AAJ 1972 and a correction in AAJ 1973).]

We approached up the Quebrada Quesque, close to the town of Catac, in the southern Cordillera Blanca. It took approximately four hours to reach our base camp below the north face of Mururaju, also called Pongos Sur (5,688m), which was first climbed by Lionel Terray in 1952 and hosts a number of routes on its south face (see AAJ 1965 and AAJ 2006). Along the way, we passed many beautiful lakes and a large number of *Puya raimondii*, a rare plant that does not flower until its 100 years old.

From our camp, it took about 3.5 hours to reach the south face of Pongos Norte. From there, the 300m climb took us approximately three hours on predominately snowy but somewhat mixed terrain, which we protected with snow stakes, ice screws, and rock gear. The sixth and final pitch ascended unconsolidated powder snow, which made progress slow and dangerous.

On the same day, Max Alvarez and Cesar Vicuña attempted the west ridge of Pongos Norte but were unable to finish it.

— Alvaro Lafuente, Spain, with information from Beto Pinto, Perú

Images

PONGOS N 5680m

QUEBRADA QUESQUE

PARED SUR 300M

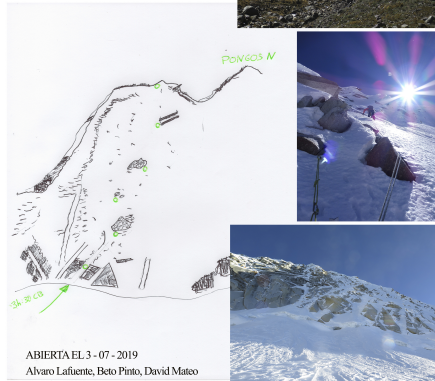
6 largos

MATERIAL

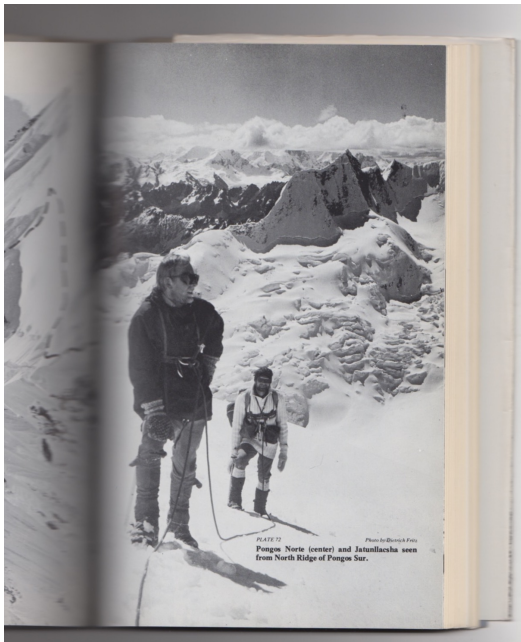
Juego fisureros

Uno o dos tornillos de hielo

Estacas



A photo-topo of the 2019 route on the south side of Pongos Norte (5,680m), stopping at the shoulder west of the main peak.



A scan from AAJ 1973, showing the south face of Pongos Norte (center) with Jatunllacsha to the east (right) as seen from Pongos Sur.

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