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El Capitan, Golden Gate, One-Day Free Ascent

California, Yosemite National Park

On November 4, Emily Harrington (USA) became the first woman to free El Capitan's Golden Gate (ca 38 pitches, 5.13a) in a single day, the fourth person to free this route in a day, and the fourth woman to free climb any route on El Cap in a day.

Golden Gate, freed by Alexander and Thomas Huber in October 2000, shares the same line as Freerider before breaking off to the right from El Cap Spire (and after the notorious Monster Offwidth). A one-day ascent is notably difficult as the route's hardest pitches are all in the last ten.

Harrington first redpointed Golden Gate over six days in 2015, and returned in November 2019 to attempt an in-a-day ascent. On November 24 she took a serious fall while simul-climbing the Freeblast slabs low on the route, resulting in a rescue and a trip to the hospital, though she avoided serious injury.

On her successful ascent in 2020, Harrington took another serious fall, on the Golden Desert pitch, and hit her head. Though she had a deep gash on her forehead, she persevered through the remaining pitches and topped out the route after 21 hours and 13 minutes.

Previous one-day free ascents of El Cap by women included Lynn Hill's ground-breaking climb of the Nose (harder than Golden Gate) in 1994 and two ascents of Freerider (generally considered easier overall than Golden Gate) by Steph Davis and Mayan Smith-Gobat.

— Andy Anderson

Images

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