



AAC Publications

Oak Creek Drainage, Gambler Wall, New Routes

United States, Utah, Zion National Park

In November 2020, Earl Lunceford and I climbed a 1,300' new route on an unnamed wall in the Oak Creek drainage of Zion National Park. The wall is visible from the Zion Human History Museum, near the park's south entrance. This wall is deeper into Oak Creek than the Angelino Wall and The Shadow Line (9 pitches, 5.11 A3+).

The first half of the route contained high-quality aid climbing up to A2, and the upper pitches went mostly free on very good rock. One highlight was pitch seven, which climbs a glorious 5.8 chimney, then an incredible hand crack, then a steep offwidth, before finally finishing at one of the best bivy ledges—huge, flat, with great views—in Zion. We called the route Roll the Hard 6 (11 pitches, V 5.10 A2+).

In March 2021, I returned to the wall with Ky Hart. We climbed another new route that started with the same first pitch as Roll the Hard 6, which Ky was able to free at 5.11a. We veered right and stayed on an independent, parallel line, cutting left and crossing Roll the Hard 6 at the top of pitch four, then continuing straight up to the top. One of the best sections entailed leapfrogging number 5-size cams out a monster offwidth roof on pitch seven. To bivouac, we rappelled a rope length from the top of pitch seven to the excellent ledge on Roll the Hard 6, then juggled the rope the next day to continue up the route. We named this second route Splittin' Eights and Hittin' Straights (1,300', 11 pitches, V 5.11 A2).

Both routes have great rock, and both have bolted anchors on every pitch. To descend from either, rappel Roll the Hard 6.

As far as we know, these are the only routes that top out the wall, although there has been single-pitch activity at the base. If this face is in fact unnamed, we'd propose naming it the Gambler Wall.

— Matt Ward

Images



Roll the Hard 6 (yellow) and Splittin' Eights and Hittin' Straights (red) on the 1,300-foot "Gambler Wall."

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