



AAC Publications

Chaupi Huanca, Northwest Spur, Big Fighter

Peru, Cordillera Blanca

In late June, we traveled to the Rurec Valley to attempt Chaupi Huanca (ca 4,850m), after speaking with teams of Spanish and Ecuadorian climbers, who both had attempted the peak recently, about an unfinished route on the northwest spur, quite far left of the route Via Monttrek (Callado-Pedrochi, 1997).

[Editor's Note: The northwest spur was first attempted by Leandro Jochymek, Anibal Maturano, and Santiago Scavolini (all Argentina) in 2016. They climbed approximately eight pitches with difficulties to 7a+ and placed some bolts for protection and anchors. In June 2021, Simon Bustamante, Nicolas Davalos, Felipe Proaño (all Ecuador), and Austin O'Brien (USA) began just right of this prior attempt, joined it for several pitches, then continued up new terrain to a large ledge. They climbed a total of 11 pitches on their attempt, with difficulties up to 6c, also placing bolts for protection and anchors.]

On June 30, we arrived at our base camp in the Rurec with the spur as our target. On July 1, we began by climbing the Argentine line, then continued up the new terrain climbed by the Ecuadorian team. After nine pitches, we reached the large ledge 300m up the wall, where we would spend the next three nights. On July 2, we opened the next three pitches, which were the most demanding on the route (6b+, 6c/A2, and 7a; it seems possible the section of A2 could be freed at 8a+). We fixed ropes and returned to the ledge.

The next morning, July 3, our alarm went off at 6 a.m. It was going to be a hard day. With little water on the wall, we knew we had to summit or else go down. We didn't know how long we had left to the top, and, although we had started with three drill batteries, only three-quarters of the final one remained. At 7 a.m., we began ascending the 150m of fixed ropes from the previous day. By 9 a.m., Jaime was leading pitch 13 (6b+).

After reaching a second shoulder on the spur, Jaime continued up a sporty pitch (6a), placing the first bolt of the day. Then, Alex climbed a spectacular 60m dihedral and chimney (6b), placing a second bolt. It looked like there was still a long way to go to the furthest summit, which is southeast of the summit of the main face, as seen from below, and may be slightly higher. We skirted this northwest top from behind, and luckily, Alex was able to reach the high point on the southeast top in a final 60m pitch (6c). In all, we climbed 10 new pitches (two very easy) from the bivy ledge. We placed 14 protection bolts in addition to anchors.

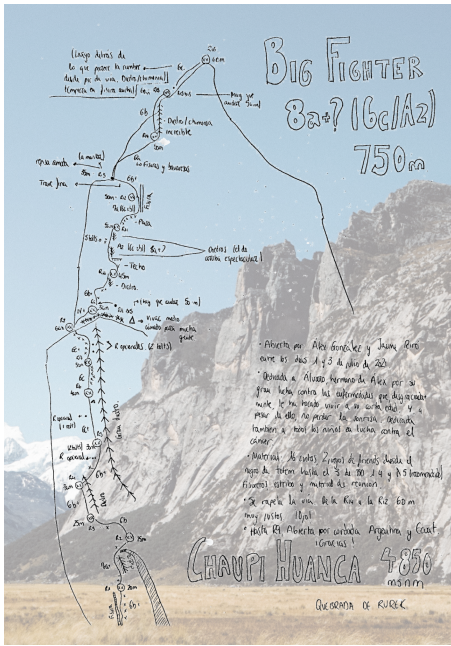
On the summit, we called home to celebrate our route, Big Fighter (750m, 19 pitches, 6c A2). The name is a tribute to Álex's brother, who, battling cancer, has been in a more complicated fight than reaching any summit. We arrived at our camp on the large ledge again 30 minutes after dark. The next day we were back in Huaraz. The route remains to be free climbed from the ground up—some bolts were placed using aid, not from stances.

— Álex González and Jaime Peiró, Spain

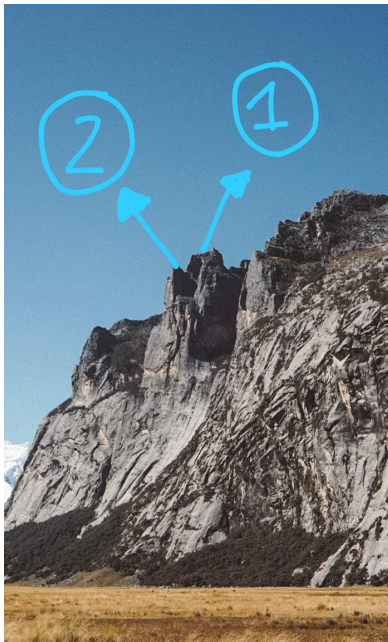
Editor's note: Previous AAJ reports have incorrectly stated the summit elevation of Chaupi Huanca as 5,179m. According to satellite imagery and local sources, the tower is approximately 4,800–4,850m, with the southeast top (believed to be highest) visible from up- or down-valley and separated by a notch from

the northwest top that caps the main face. The routes (from left to right) Via Monttrek, Caravaca Jubilar, Qui lo Vado Ancora, and Hasta Luego, Zorro all appear to have reached the northwest top. Previously unreported in the AAJ, in 2010, Anibal Maturano and Santiago Scavolini became the first to climb the Italian route Qui lo Vado Ancora (Palma-Pavan-Pedeferra, 2007) to the northwest top of Chaupi Huanca (the route originally finished at a junction with Caravaca Jubilar, below its upper dihedral); they climbed 200m of new terrain (to 6a+) above the upper dihedral to reach the top. Manuel López Ponce and Carlos Ly repeated the complete route to the northwest top in 2016, and then Ponce, Iker Pou, and Eneko Pou made the first free ascent of Qui lo Vado Ancora in 2017, at 7c+/8a-, but did not reach the northwest top due to a snowstorm.

Images



A photo topo for the route Big Fighter (750m, 19 pitches, 6c A2) on the northwest face of Chaupi Huanca.



Chaupi Huanca is approximately 4,800–4,850m, with what appears to be the highest top to the southeast, separated by a notch from the northwest summit atop the main northwest face. Previous routes (from left to right) Via Monttrek, Caravaca Jubilar, Qui lo Vado Ancora, and Hasta Luego, Zorro all appear to have reached the northwest summit.



Álex González aids through a steep section on Big Fighter (750m, 19 pitches, 6c A2) on the northwest face of Chaupi Huanca.



Álex González on the upper portion of Big Fighter (750m, 19 pitches, 6c A2) on the northwest face of Chaupi Huanca.

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