



AAC Publications

Pik Zabor and Pik Gronky, Attempts

Kyrgyzstan, Tien Shan, Western Kokshaal-too

In late August and September, a team of four from the U.K. (Clement Attwood, Thomas Walker, Calum Wesencraft, and Nick Whimster) aimed to establish new routes above the Kyzyl Asker Glacier. After acclimatization and several days of effort, an advanced base camp (ABC) was established on the glacier, a few kilometers from the steep faces of Pik Vernyi and “Pik Zabor.” Initial reconnaissance of Zabor and a previously unconsidered face on Pik Gronky revealed lots of potential. [The name Zabor or Sabor has been applied to two formations in this valley, leading to some confusion. See note below.] With almost daily snowstorms, it was clear that big- wall rock climbs would be unlikely.

After a resupply, some rest, and poor weather at base camp, the team returned to ABC for a week of mostly good weather. On September 10, they attempted an obvious chimney system on the northernmost part of the east face of Zabor, to the right of Dry Ice Queen, climbed by a Slovak pair in 2022 (AAJ 2023). The climbers ran out of time and retreated after encountering thin ice and limited protection, then deep snow on an alternative line.

After a rest day, the team tried a route on the southwest side of Pik Gronky (ca 5,080m), starting with a snow gully, guarded by a pitch of ice, that leads to a notch in the west ridge. (This gully is to the left of Take a Walk on the Wild Side, climbed by a Slovenian party in 2015.) Above the notch, a burly mixed pitch and a pure rock pitch led to easier terrain, then a last steep rock band gained the summit ridge. The climbers moved up the ridge together until darkness forced a retreat about 100m beneath the top, followed by an open bivouac farther down. The incomplete route was called If You Like Piña Coladas (700m, TD+ VII). [A comprehensive expedition report can be downloaded [here](#).]

— Information from Nick Whimster, U.K., and expedition report

PIK ZABOR (SABOR) NOMENCLATURE: In a report in AAJ 2023 on the route Dry Ice Queen, climbers from Slovakia identified the face as being on Pik Zabor (Sabor, 4,850m), “just opposite Pik Vernyi.” This face, also attempted by the U.K. team in 2023, indeed rises opposite the northwest face of Vernyi, but the identity is confusing because Sabor was a name previously used for Vernyi. It was called that by the British expedition that climbed the north ridge in 2003. A report in AAJ 2005 as well as a map published by the AAJ also used the name Sabor. However, this mountain was named Vernyi in the Soviet era, when the peak was first climbed, and it has been called Vernyi in the AAJ since 2005. It’s not clear if the formation climbed by Dry Ice Queen, on the northeast side of Kyzyl Asker, had any earlier name, but Zabor is coming into common usage.

Images



Looking up the Kyzyl Asker Glacier, with Pik Vernyi the most prominent rocky summit on the left.



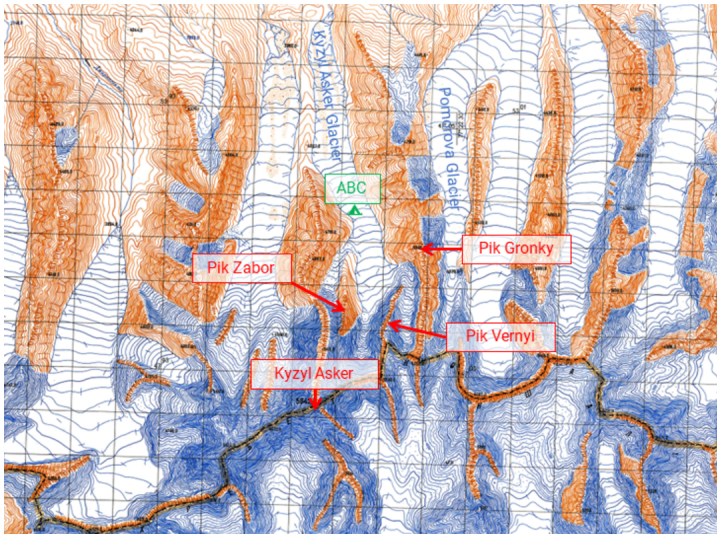
The line attempted in 2023 on the mixed buttress on the northeast side of Kyzyl Asker, known as Pik Zabor in recent years. The 2022 route Dry Ice Queen is seen on the left.



During the attempt on a new route on "Pik Zabor."



The line of the incomplete route If You Like Piña Coladas on the southwest side of Pik Gronky.



Map of the 2023 expedition's targets above the Kyzyl Asker Glacier.

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