



## AAC Publications

---

### **Chaupi Huanca, Big Fighter, Free Ascent**

Peru, Cordillera Blanca

**On July 8 and 9, John Ebers and I made the first free ascent of Big Fighter (750m, VI 5.13b) on Chaupi Huanca (4,850m) in Quebrada Rurec.**

John Ebers at the hanging belay below pitch ten, the 8a (5.13b) crux of Big Fighter on Chaupi Huanca.  
Photo: Josh Wharton

Big Fighter was first climbed in 2021 by Spanish climbers Álex González and Jaume Peiró, who spent four days establishing a 19-pitch route at 6c/5.11 A2. [The route had been attempted twice before; it takes a line to the left of Qui lo Vado Ancora (Palma-Pavan-Pedeferrí, 2006). Big Fighter was the first climb to reach Chaupi Huanca's south summit. A topo from the 2021 ascent is available with the story linked above.]

Our ascent clocked in at 5.13b and is pretty sustained in the 5.11 to 5.12- range. It is relatively high quality through the first 11 pitches, but the quality diminishes and vegetation increases on the final pitches. There is a fantastic forest bivy at the end of pitch eight. [The Americans climbed Big Fighter in 16 pitches versus the Spaniards' 19.]

There are only two "hard" pitches: pitch seven (5.12+) nearing the big bivy ledge and pitch ten (the crux) above the ledge. The crux pitch is an exceptional 8a, long and involved, with multiple cruxes. It climbs out a steep roof off the belay and into a pumpy layback section. A bit of easier climbing then leads to technical and powerful face climbing. After that comes a tricky corner with gear-protected stemming.

Generally speaking, the best rock and crack systems in the Blanca seem to be quite vegetated, which isn't conducive to free climbing. The Rurec Valley does seem to have lots of potential, especially for people willing to invest the time and energy necessary to develop face routes away from major crack systems. Given its proximity to Huaraz, I think it's probably the best place to put up a free climbing "king line" in the Blanca (especially if you're hoping it will be repeated). There is obvious potential up the center of Chaupi Huanca and on the impressive headwall on the formation to the east. The Pou brothers' route Zerain (860m, 7a+ A1), just right of Chaupi Huanca, is also in need of a free ascent.

—Josh Wharton, USA

## Images



John Ebers following pitch 11 (5.11+), above the crux of Big Fighter. While potential for big new free lines in the area is plentiful, Wharton says, "Just come prepared to place lots of bolts or do lots of gardening."



John Ebers at the hanging belay below pitch ten, the 8a (5.13b) crux of Big Fighter on Chaupi Huanca.



Sunset from the "fantastic" bivouac at the end of pitch eight on Big Fighter in Quebrada Rurec.

Article Details

Author	Josh Wharton
Publication	AAJ
Volume	66
Issue	99
Page	206
Copyright Date	2025
Article Type	Climbs and expeditions