



AAC Publications

Nevado Colque Cruz, south face

Peru, Cordillera Vilcanota

In April I went with Luis Crispin to explore the south face of Nevado Colque Cruz (6,102m, a.k.a. Alcamarinayoc), at the northern end of the Cordillera Vilcanota. We made it to ca 5,900m before a large slab avalanche cut loose and we retreated. In July we tried again with other climbers from Australia and Poland, but we were not able pass our previous high point. As a consolation on that trip, we climbed Nevado Chumpe (6,110m) by its northwest ridge to get a better view of our objective.

I returned in late September with Luis Crispin and Edwin Espinoza for another attempt. Just getting to the first camp involves climbing through an unstable moraine I've affectionately called the "gravel pit." We left for our climb at 11:30 p.m. on September 24 and made our way through the now-familiar crevasses beneath the wall. There was more snow than expected because the rainy season had begun a week earlier and dumped loose, wet snow on the mountain.

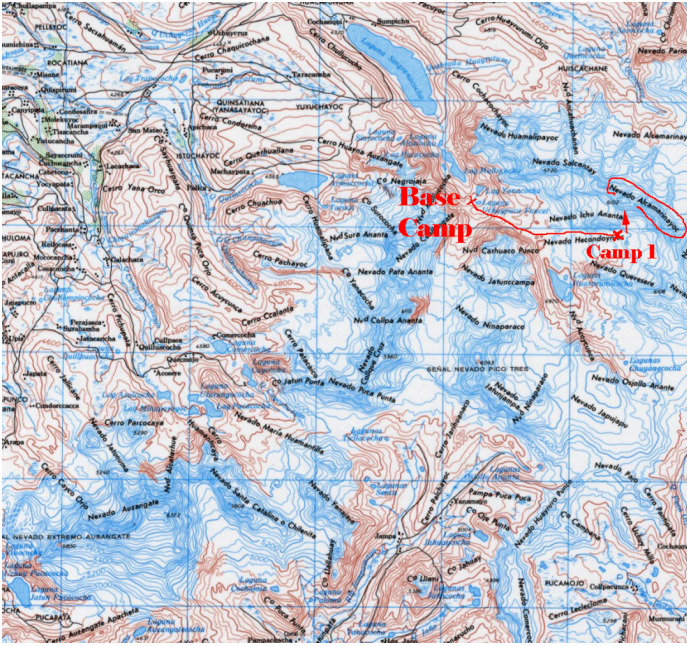
When we reached the crux ice wall, Luis had to turn back due to an ankle injury he had sustained on Yerupaja two weeks earlier. As he made his way down alone, we watched an avalanche almost hit him far below us; however, he was okay and we continued. Edwin and I climbed up and left across the ice wall toward its apex. Most of this wall is 60-70° until the final, steep 5m. Above the icefall, we simul-climbed for 300m on good snow (60°) until reaching a bergschrund below the final summit block. From here, we traversed right (east) across the south face to gain a lower-angle ramp. The final slopes to the summit were relatively easy though tiring due to deep snow. We arrived at the summit at 10:25 a.m. just as the clouds began to blow in from the jungle to the north (500m, D).

From the top, we downclimbed the snow ramp and then rappelled from four V-threads on the icy south face. After some additional downclimbing, we reached the tent around 4 p.m. and hiked out the next day.

Nevado Colque Cruz is known to have been climbed seven times, first by Germans in 1953, by the Japanese in 1965, a Canadian–New Zealand–Australian team in 1974, by Germans in 1984, by Italians in 1987, and most recently by a British team up the mountain's technical southwest face (AAJ 2007). In 2005, Dave Wilkinson explored the south face but judged it out of condition and made an ascent of nearby Nevado Ichu Ananta instead (AAJ 2005).

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Images



An overview of the Cordillera Vilcanota, showing the team's camps and location of Nevado Colque Cruz (a.k.a. Alcamarinayoc, 6,102m).



Looking west from the upper south face of Nevado Colque Cruz.



The view from the upper part of the south face.



Climbing through deep snow up the final snow ramp to the summit.



Edwin Espinoza atop the summit of Nevado Colque Cruz.



Nathan Heald descending from the summit as clouds build.



Nevado Colque Cruz, as seen from Nevado Chumpe, showing the line of ascent on the south face (500m, D).

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