



## AAC Publications

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### **Tucupit Point, Goat Rodeo**

Utah, Zion National Park, Kolob Canyons

**There is a ledge 250' off the ground on the north face of Tucupit Point, and below the ledge is a wide vertical wall, devoid of even the smallest seam.** Above are several crack systems that continue 1,000' to the summit, and hold what I hoped would be some of the best free climbing in Zion National Park. Wouldn't it be worth every effort to reach this ledge?

In fall 2020, I made my first attempt to do so, starting from the ground a few hundred feet to the left of what I naturally came to call "The Ledge." I aided up a series of seams, figuring I could eventually swing right. There was a point where I could have, but the climbing straight above looked too compelling, so I continued up. After an extensive effort, the otherworldly aid route Star Planet (VI 5.11 A3+) was born.

Nearly two years passed. The Ledge was still calling me. I had to get there, somehow. I knew I would never repeat the desperately thin seams of Star Planet's first pitch—which had taken me six days to climb on the first ascent—so my options were either to create a bolt ladder hundreds of feet long or come in from the top. The first option seemed an abomination, so my only choice was to rappel 1,000' from the summit. My good friend Brandon Gottung is always up for an adventure on Tucupit, so we made plans and started in October 2022.

Tucupit Point is unreachable by any hiking or scrambling route, so we would have to climb another route first in order to gain the summit ridge. Brandon and another friend, Thomas Gilmore, climbed the west face via Tucupit Occidentalis (800', IV 5.10+), the easiest route on Tucupit and a route Brandon and I had established in 2015, and fixed lines on the way down. The next day, the three of us jugged up and traversed the mountain via some exciting scrambling, hiking, and rappelling to reach the top of Star Planet. We then descended the first several rappels of Star Planet, before veering off to climber's right using several of the pendulum points and bolt ladders of that route as anchors. We finally installed a bolted station on a tiny stance and fixed rope to the ground. This anchor, 80' to the left of The Ledge, was where our new route would begin.

After a rest day, we jugged the fixed lines and I took off on the first pitch, which consisted of two tension traverses, 5.10 free climbing, and bat-hooking between bolt placements—some solid and some loose. Finally, we had made it to The Ledge! I had been dreaming about this for years—so of course the Ledge was much narrower and more sloping than I imagined. After again fixing ropes to the ground, we hauled our kit and enjoyed a three-night bivy on The Ledge as we worked our way up the wall above. The climbing was outstanding, but, as I learned again and again, my dreams don't always align with reality. I was expecting to free climb, but we progressed almost exclusively on clean aid, with occasional pin work and free climbing mixed in. In total, we placed seven lead bolts and 14 anchor bolts.

As a toast to the absurdity of it all, we named our new route Goat Rodeo (1,180', 8 pitches, V 5.10 A2). Future parties, if there ever are any, can avoid the initial 80' traversing pitch by rappelling this route instead of Star Planet to reach the start.

— Karl Kvashay

## Images



Goat Rodeo (in red) starts 250' above the ground. Brandon Gottung and Karl Kvashay accessed the beginning of the route by climbing a previously established line, Tucupit Occidentalis, and then rappelling Star Planet (in blue).



Tucupit Point and the roundabout approach to Goat Rodeo (1,180', V 5.10 A2), which begins 250' above the ground. The climbers ascended Tucupit Occidentalis (1), traversed the top of the formation, and then rappelled Star Planet (2). Goat Rodeo is to the right of Star Planet.



Karl Kvashay on the pitch one traverse of Goat Rodeo (1,140', V 5.10 A2), Tucupit Point, Kolob Canyon, Zion National Park, Utah.



Brandon Gottung cleaning pitch three of Goat Rodeo (1,140', V 5.10 A2), Tucupit Point, Kolob Canyon, Zion National Park, Utah.

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