



AAC Publications

Pik Korolyova, Direct North Face

Kyrgyzstan, Tien Shan, Western Kokshaal-too

The north face of Pik Korolyova (5,816m), showing (1) Oleneva-Mukhametzyanov-Parfenov (2022) and (2) Belotserkovskiy-Temerev-Tyulyupo (2021), continuing up the northwest ridge to the top.

In July our team of Nadezhda (Nadya) Oleneva, Ratmir Mukhametzyanov, and Alexander Parfenov, all from Russia, made the first ascent of the main north face of Pik Korolyova (Koroleva, 5,816m, 41°04'48"N, 77°46'08"E). [In 2021, Kirill Belotserkovskiy, Ivan Temerev, and Alexey Tyulyupo climbed a couloir on the west end of the north face and followed the northwest ridge to the summit; this route was used in descent by the 2022 team. See report [here](#).] **Soon after setting up base camp, we began acclimatizing by camping on the Tourist Glacier, where we were able to see the north face of Korolyova and plan our route. Then we spent one night on the Essledovateley Glacier and another on the slope of Pik Zinaida at 5,170m. After a short rest in base camp, we set up an advanced base at 4,200m on the Tourist Glacier, at the foot of Korolyova.**

By 5a.m. on July 20 we were approaching the bergschrund. The first section of the face was quite easy: We moved simultaneously up a 150m ice slope (50°–60°) in “French arrow style,” which means the leader trailed two ropes, placing protection for each strand, and the seconds each followed on one of the ropes. When the wall became steeper, we switched to the “Krasnoyarsk style”: The leader climbed for 30m, made an anchor, fixed a second rope at its midpoint, and then continued climbing; the belayer ascended the fixed rope and at the same time belayed the leader with a Grigri, while the third member of the team ascended the rope below. This allows the team to climb very quickly, and we climbed all the difficult sections in this style.

On the first day we climbed about 700m vertically, with 450m of steep, sometimes vertical ice that had a more porous structure than glacier ice. We set up Camp 1 on a snowy ridge where we chopped a ledge for our tent. On the second day we climbed the key pitches up a 200m rocky bastion that required around 45m of aid climbing up to A3. The climbing was made more difficult because the cracks were filled with ice. Further mixed terrain followed, and the ice sections became noticeably easier. That second day, we climbed about 380m and set up camp on a small, steeply sloping shelf. Stomping down the snow so we could put up our tent took about two hours, and even after all this effort one-third of the tent still hung over the void.

On the third day we climbed the second rock bastion, with 250m of mixed climbing. The rock there was not so steep, but the protection was poor. The ice was thin and porous, so the ice screws could only penetrate halfway, and the rock was chossy all around.

Before reaching the northwest ridge, we passed 200m of very deep snow. The steepness was only about 50°–60°, but there was no way to organize a proper belay. We climbed onto the ridge after cutting through a cornice in the least overhanging part. Here we left our gear and went to the summit along the broad, gently sloping ridge. On July 22 at 3:20 p.m., we reached the top.

We spent the night on the ridge and started the descent early the next morning. By 3 p.m. we finally rappelled back to flat ground, and at 10 p.m. we reached our base camp.

We graded the 1,516m-high route ED2 6A (Russian). Almost the entire route was free climbed except for the 45m part with ice-filled cracks. Each day we swapped leads: Ratmir on the first day, Alexander on the second, and me on the third. Thus, each of us was able to enjoy the ascent of the stunning

north face of Korolyova.

– **Nadya Oleneva, Russia**

Images



The north face of Pik Korolyova (5,816m), showing (1) Oleneva-Mukhametzyanov- Parfenov (2022) and (2) Belotserkovskiy-Temerev-Tyulyupo (2021), continuing up the northwest ridge to the top. Both parties descended by the line of the 2021 ascent.



During the approach to Pik Korolyova, with the north face visible in back.



Acclimatization below Pik Zinaida (Ziniy).



Approaching the base of Pik Korolyova.



The first day on the north face of Pik Korolyova.



Ice climbing during the first day on the direct north face of Pik Korolyova.



View down the north face of Pik Korolyova during the first day of the 2022 ascent.



Camp 1 on the direct north face of Pik Korolyova.



Rock wall during the second day of the direct north face of Korolyova.



Steep mixed ground during the second day of the ascent of the north face of Pik Korolyova.



Descending the west ridge of Pik Korolyova after climbing the north face.



Camp on the Essledovateley Glacier during acclimatization for Pik Korolyova.

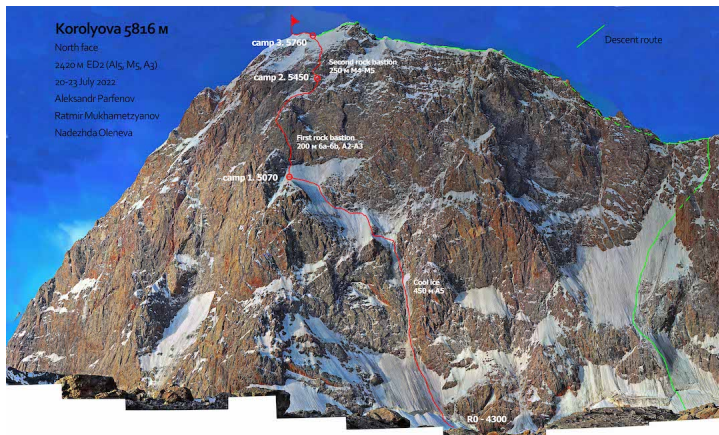


Photo-topo of the 2022 route on the north face of Pik Korolyova.

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