



THE FIST FIGHT

Grade: M6, 180m

Location: The Fist, Spray Valley Provincial Park AB

Base Elevation & Aspect: ???m, Northeast facing

First Ascent: Kevin Sevalrud, Merrick Montemurro, October 2022

Editor's Note: I have reformatted and abridged this from the original post by Kevin on the Facebook group Rockies Ice & Mixed Conditions. All photos, text and any errors are from that post -NB

"The Fist Fight (M6, 180m) follows an obvious gash on the E face of the Fist. It is the short and stout sibling of *The Manhole* which lies further north on a similar aspect of the same peak. We led all pitches ground up with no protection bolts over two separate days. We later opted to add two protection bolts (one each on P1 & 3) to make things a bit more reasonable for future attempts. The climbing is sustained, with adequate protection for harder sections, and some runouts in easier spots. The first pitch is classic, the crux of which is like being in a fist fight in a phone booth! Chimney & offwidth skills will be useful, as will pins and a hammer. The stone is overall good, with fun chockstone hooks, blobs of ice, and frozen turf sticks. The roof right off the ground is a good indicator of how the rest will go. We didn't attempt the ridge to the summit, as it looked convoluted and hard to protect. Instead, the route has 4 bolted rappels for a speedy descent. Go try it! This is a great mini-alpine adventure to test your fitness and gear skills for the coming season."

Approach

The approach involves booting up (or traversing across) the start zone of a large south-facing avalanche path. Best done with excellent snow stability or early in the fall. Turn west off the Spray Lakes road towards Engadine Lodge, and park in the first lot to the left after the bridge. Follow the trail towards, then up Commonwealth Creek, until below the south face of the Fist. Ascend steepening slopes directly to the base of the route, which splits the SE face. Alternatively, approach as for Tryst chutes, but continue along Tryst ridge, traversing across loose slopes below the large gendarme on Tryst ridge. (2 hours).

Rack

Camalots 0.3-4 (a #5 is optional, but helpful) doubles of .4-.75 & 3, nuts, pins (2-3KBs, LA, angle, and spectre). We used a 50m rope & tag.

P1: M6 45m

Begin in the cave below the obvious crack system, and climb an overhanging, flared chimney with great hooks and gear. Continue stemming and hooking chockstones through overlaps, and at a loose section clip a bolt on the right and pull through the roof, then head up a good corner to a tricky mantle. Tackle the final chockstone roof/chimney (crux) to a bolted belay on the left wall.

P2: M4 50m

Follow the gully around a corner to the left, and stem up corners with good gear. Continue to the left until encountering a slab on the right side. Arrange gear in cracks to the left, and tiptoe up the slab to the right (easier when snow covered). A mantle leads to a bolted belay on the right at the base of a large right-trending crack.

P3: M5+ 45m

Step left and head up a deceptively steep broken face to a delicate mantle. Continue up the right side of the gully, overcoming a step with a wide crack, then pull through the overhanging slot above with difficulty (bolt). More chimneying with excellent twin crack torques above, and a final squeeze. Reach a large ledge, then walk left to a bolted belay beside a large detached flake.

P4: M5+R 50m

Step back right into the cracks, and climb several bodylengths of steep quality climbing on good chockstones, gear and small, positive feet. Above, put in a few pitons to pass the loose roof into an easier dihedral. At a ledge, choose the short left or right (FA) cracks. Then take a long leftward trending runout section followed by gear. Pull into a concavity, then tackle the final roof crux. A few turf sticks in the corner lead to a bolted station on the left, just below the ridge.

Descent

Rappel the route on bolted anchors.

Kevin on pitch 1

