



Maarten van Haeren starting into the second pitch ice. Photo: Ethan Berman

RIDERS ON THE SWARM

Grade: M6+ WI4, 150m

Location: Noseeum Mountain, Banff National Park AB

Base Elevation & Aspect: 2050m, West facing

First Ascent: Ethan Berman, Maarten van Haeren, November 17 2023

ATES: Challenging (2)

Editor's Note: I have reformatted this from Maarten's post on the Facebook group Rockies Ice & Mixed Conditions. Photos and text are from that post, approach line on topo is approximate. -NB

"Apparently ice does form here some years, but it often falls down due to its sunny aspect. We certainly noticed the delaminated nature of the first two pitches, you've been warned. Despite that, we thought the climbing was very good, rock quality was excellent on the first two pitches (and mostly good on P3)."

Approach

Park at Mosquito Creek hostel, 24km north of Highwa 1 on Highway 93N.

Cross the road, and hike up to the route which is visible on the southwest side of Noseeum Mountain above. Stay on the south side of Mosquito Creek (do not cross the highway bridge). Continue up to below a lower-angled gully, far left of the hanging dagger. 1 hour to this point. Scramble/climb easy mixed to a snow ledge/gully. Proceed up the gully, and pass a chock stone on sloped ledge on the left. Belay below the start of the route. This can also be climbed as a couple pitches if desired.

P1: M5 WI4 60m

Follow the ice into the obvious drainage. Belay at good ledge, at a 2-nut fixed rappel anchor. During the FA, almost no ice was trustworthy, so the pitch protected fully on rock gear.

P2: M5 WI4 60m

An easy groove leads to more thin ice climbing, a short curtain and more thin ice. Gain more solid ice to a small ledge below the dagger and a second 2-nut rappel anchor. As with P1, ice gear is not usually trustworthy so bring rock gear.

P3: M6+ WI4 25m

Step right into the corner, clipping bolts to gain the ice which is followed to the top. Cams 0.5-2 can be placed in between some bolts if desired. Fun pitch with some unique movement.

Rack

Cams from #0.1-3, doubles #0.3-1. Nuts, screws incl. stubbies, 2 angle pitons. Two 60m ropes.

Descent

Rappel 3 times to the base of the route, and once more down the lower-angle terrain below.

FA Note (from Maarten)

- Lots of solution pockets make for excellent climbing on the tools. I wouldn't be surprised if you could climb the bottom two pitches almost completely without ice, on a different year.

