

THE CHASE IS BETTER THAN THE CATCH

Grade: M8 WI4, 135m

Location: Mount Stephen, Yoho National Park BC

Base Elevation & Aspect: 1500m, Northwest facing

First Ascent: Fred Giroux, Raphael Slawinski, March 26 2017

ATES: Complex (3)

Editor's Note: I have reformatted this from Raph's blog post on his blog. For more info, check it out here: <https://raphaelslawinski.blogspot.com/2017/03/field-follies-part-3-chase-is-better.html> -NB

"Even though we were only a few ropelengths up, the position was outrageous, with the undercut rock disappearing out of sight and the icy slab of the first pitch far below. The last pitch, if ten metres of easy ice could be called that, was a formality. However, like many formalities, it was an important one. In a way, this little lick of ice at the top of the wall justified the route's existence. Still, there was no question that the chase was better than the catch."

Approach

Park at the Monarch campground/Yoho Valley Road parking lot 4.2km east of Field.

Hike back to Highway 1 and cross the Yoho River. Continue across the valley to below *Twisted*, and head up to the train tunnel. Walk westward along the tracks until below the deep corner feature on the cliffs above, then cross and head up avalanche slopes to a break in the cliffband to the right of the upper corner. Climb through the cliffband (either roped or unroped) and continue up snow to ice left of the corner itself. 1-2 hours.

P1: WI4 50m

Climb the thin smear of ice on the left wall of the deep bay (see topo). Pass 2 bolts then keep going up thin ice as it gets thicker. Continue up the short pillar to a screw belay.

P2: M4 20m

Move right then up over chossy rock to ice, with small cams and screws to protect. "Easy, loose and surprisingly engaging." Climb onto the snow ledge and belay on the left ice pillar above.

P3: M7 25m

Move right up the right-hand of the pillars, and at its top follow a few bolts up and right, following a traverse line below the small roof. Head up at a short crack to a bolt belay.

P4: M8 30m

Head right then up on barely-good-enough hooks, not physical but sustained climbing. Pass lots of bolts, and finish up a corner with a few cam placements to a bolt belay right of the ice.

P5: WI3 10m

Step left on blocky rock to the ice, and take it to the top.

Descent

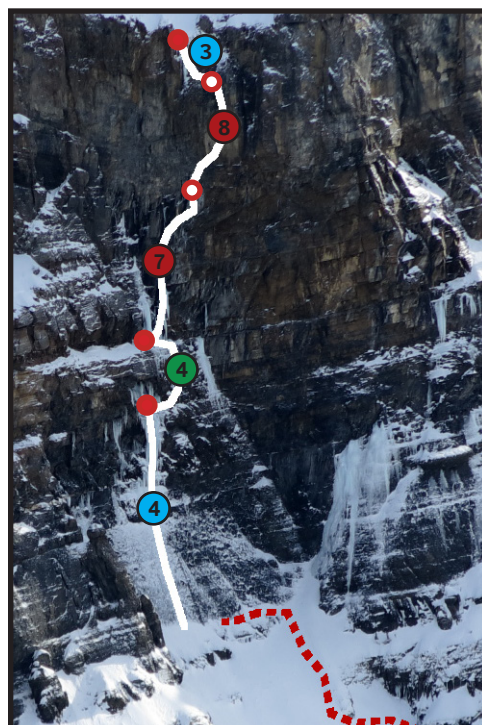
Rappel twice to the base. A bolted rappel anchor is located straight down from the belay on P3.

Rack

Cams to #2, doubles as desired. Screws including several stubbies, 15 draws. 2x 70m ropes necessary.

FA Notes

- P1-2 may share terrain with *Fat Tire*.
- The FA party were joined on separate occasions by Jon Walsh and Ian Welsted.



Raphael Slawinski on the exposed crux of the route. Photo: Jon Walsh

