



Photo by John Scurlock

B.C. CANADA, COAST MOUNTAIN RANGE

Monarch Mountain: Game of Thrones

ROUTE DESCRIPTION AND CLIMBING SECTIONS:

- » The 1250m high south-west face of Monarch can be divided into three sections. The lower two sections are defined by pronounced spurs, but rather than follow the crest of the first spur, Game of Thrones climbs a series of walls to its left. The second spur is the steeper of the two and leads to the apex of the wall, roughly level with the foot of the hanging “roof” icefield of the West Face route. Above, the third section follows a lower-angled ridge directly to the summit.
Start by descending 150m from the Monarch-Page col and traversing horizontally across broken rock, snow and scree to reach the foot of the face at 2320m. The route starts up a left-trending ramp before following the left side of the central gully system that retains (in high summer) three significant areas of snow – the Hidden Icefield, the Triangular Snow Patch and the Great Icefield.
The route was climbed in 32 pitches with 400m of moving together.
- » Section 1: Climb two pitches to the start of the ramp (5.8) and continue easily up the ramp for 150m and cross the central gully system. Five pitches up walls and grooves (up to 5.8) to the left of the gully lead to the deeply enclosed Hidden Icefield. Cross the icefield to its top right side and climb a steep hanging groove (5.9) cutting through the back wall to an easing. Traverse slightly down and left across the central gully and climb steep walls (5.9) to the Triangular Snow Patch.
Climb slabby ground on the left side of the snow patch for two pitches (5.8) to gain a pronounced rib that leads up towards the steep second spur. Climb the rib for two pitches, bearing right at its top (5.10a) to reach the girdling ledge below the second spur at approximately 2800m (bivouac).
- » Section 2: The wall above overhangs so move right along the dwindling ledge for 30m until just above the Great Icefield and break through the roof above at its narrowest point (5.10a). Continue first slightly right for two pitches (5.9), then left for a pitch to gain an open corner system. This leads (5.8 then 5.9) to a large snow field where the angle temporarily eases (13 pitches in all from the bivouac ledge).
Continue easily up the crest for a pitch to a right facing corner. Follow this up and right (5.7) then bear left up a ramp to the crest. Move left 10m and climb a steep hidden groove (5.9) to where the angle eases. A pitch of easier ground leads to the top of the second spur at approximately 3300m (5 pitches from the large snow patch).
- » Section 3: Move easily up to the upper lower-angled ridge and follow it for 200m to the upper snow slopes (bivouac). Move right up snow and climb the final broad gully to exit on the summit ridge just left of the summit (70m).



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RATING/DIFFICULTY:

- » ED2, 5.10a, 1540 m climbing distance, 1250 m vertical elevation, 32 pitches + 400 m moving together.

FIRST ASCENT:

- » Micha Rinn (Germany) and Simon Richardson (Scotland), 4th – 6th August 2017.

LOCATION:

- » Monarch Mountain (3572 m) is located between the Empire-Way Glacier, a branch of the Monarch Icefield, and the Horseshoe-Glacier. Except for Mount Waddington (70 km south-east), Mount Monarch is the highest peak in the 1600 km long Coast Mountain Range in British Columbia. The next mountain with a similarly height is Mount Fairweather on the border to Alaska, about 1000 km to the North. Because of its isolated location and the well-known bad weather in this region, it is rarely visited.

GPS-Coordinates of the beginning of the climb: N 51° 53' 32", W 125° 52' 53" @ 2320 m.

GPS-Coordinates of the summit: N 51° 53' 58.7", W 125° 52' 35.4" @ 3572 m.

EQUIPMENT/GEAR:

- » Camalots up to # 3. Link Cams 0.5 and 0.75. Full set of regular wires and a set of offset wires. 2 x 50 m ropes.

DESCENT:

- » Via West Face route (blue line). Follow the summit ridge to the north. At its end, abseil for one pitch (sling belay) to reach the hanging "roof" icefield of the West Face route. Cross the icefield to the west. Downclimb the ice gully (or rock beside) to reach the upper end of the fractured icefield. Cross the icefield until you reach a steep rock face. Follow the crest of the rock face for about 20m northwards, downclimb to the west until you reach the next abseil belay (sling). After the abseil you move southwards on ice and rock until you reach the mixed gully. Downclimb the mixed gully to reach the western ice flank, which leads to the Empire-Way Glacier.



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