

# Goat Wall

## Drain Game \*\* 5.11c, 420 m, rack to 4"

*Andy Genereux & Peter Gatzsch, August 2007*

A very good new route that climbs some great rock on **Goat Wall** located on the Bow Valleys **Goat Mountain**. This major alpine rock climb was established with a power drill on lead over two days, no hooks were used. All fixed gear is from bolts and the belays are all bolted. However this is "not a sport climb." Climbers will need to be competent on sustained 5.10+ and low 5.11 ground being able to place significant amounts of natural protection at the stated grades. This climb has very good rock over all but the climb has not been cleaned or groomed other than we kicked or pulled off the obvious loose blocks. Wearing a helmet is strongly advised. The route does not top out but finishes on a small subsidiary buttress. From this termination point it may be possible to climb a long pitch to join the finishing pitch of the climb the *Goatman*. We decided that this upper climbing was somewhat marginal compared to the lower route and we had threatening weather approaching. Thus we descended the climb using seven long rappels requiring **Two Ropes**. I would recommend double rope techniques be used on pitch number four to reduce rope drag. The remainder of the climb can be done with a single rope or by clipping double ropes together as for twin ropes. For gear climbers will require 16 to 18 draws of which several should be shoulder length, take a standard rack to 3.5" include a set of micro cams, and double cams 1" to 3" to protect the long full rope length pitches found on this climb.

The route is located to the right of the route **Wendigo** detailed on a cliff photo on page 82 of "**Bow Valley Rock**" (guide) by Chris Perry and Joe Josephson. The line ascends a devious line up dark grey rock to enter a huge hanging U-shaped gully from the left. This obvious feature is located roughly near the center of "**Goat Wall**" one hundred metres below the summit ridge. At the base of the cliff locate an obvious right facing dihedral located below and just left of this obvious feature on the upper face. This hanging gully "drains" a huge hidden bowl and much of the upper mountain. My dictionary describes the word "**Drain**" as:

- To cause water or other liquid in (something) to run out, leaving the area or vessel empty, dry or drier.
- Cause or allow (liquid) to run off or out of something.
- Deprive of strength or vitality."

In our case all three descriptions applied to our little adventure.

The first ascent team found out the hard way how fast things can radically change on this route after an intense thunder storm descended upon them. This particular storm dumped a couple of inches of rain, slush, and hail over a terrifying twenty minute period. Within a few minutes the U-shaped gully located above us on the upper reaches of the face turned into a dramatic two thousand foot waterfall. This would have been a spec-

tacular sight had we not been pounded by the edge of the water curtain resulting from this instant waterfall while attempting to rappel the route.

The objective danger from flash flooding is very real during one of these intense storms. You could drown or be hit by rock fall caused by large volumes of water flowing from this drainage, if caught on the lower pitches. This affects anything below the belay on top of pitch 5 on the route (we were caught in the storm at this particular belay. This location was very intense, marginally survivable!). If pinned down by the resulting torrent for any extended period, hypothermia is another very real and threatening factor to consider. When soaked completely through to the skin during a severe storm dramatically changes the outlook and competency of parties. Be warned: **Check the weather forecast!** Having said all that this is still quite a good route. It should challenge traditional climbers at the stated grades. Enjoy the experience.

**To start:** Locate the shallow right facing dihedral which starts about 3 m above a pedestal ledge with a large block on top. Scramble up 3 m to the ledge and set a gear belay.

**P1: 60 m, 5.10b.** Make a difficult move to gain the hanging right facing dihedral. Continue up the corner to the second rightward jog in the corner, then head out left to a bolt. The terrain eases as the climbing crosses slabby ground then enter a left leaning groove system above. Climb the groove for 25 m then head right and up past bolts to a ring bolt belay.

**P2: 60 m, 5.10c.** Move up and right to a bolt, traverse right to a second bolt. A thin sequence continues right (5.10c) or from the second bolt drop down for 3 m then overcome a bulge (5.10a) to regain the same line. Sustained climbing moves right then follows a faint groove past four bolts. Head right to a left facing corner. Climb the corner and face to gain a narrow ramp. Move right along the ramp to reach a cramped belay.

**Note:** When rappelling the route extend this anchor with slings to avoid hanging up the ropes.

**P3: 60 m, 5.10c.** Climb directly above the belay to eventually enter a right facing corner. Climb this devious corner for 30 m, move left and surf over an overhanging wave of rock. Move first left then back right as easier climbing leads to the belay on a rounded platform.

**P4: 60 m, 5.10c.** Make a rising traverse left to a bolt. Continue left to a second bolt then descend leftward to the base of an arete. Move left along a sloping ledge to a bolt. Climb directly to a second bolt. The rock quality deteriorates a bit before heading into a left leaning shallow groove system. After roughly 20 m in the corner system move left below an overhanging section to a bolt. Gain a second bolt and make thin moves back to the right. Climb the corner to a three bolt semi-hanging belay.

**Note:** Recommend using double rope techniques on this complicated pitch.

**P5: 45 m, 5.11a/b.** Move right to a bolt and enter a hidden corner. Climb the corner sustained past three bolts and move left on thin climbing to gain a second right leaning dihedral. Follow this feature to a pedestal with a small ledge to belay off ring bolts.

**P6: 45 m, 5.11a.** Make thin moves up and right to a bolt. Continue right on hard thin moves to gain an obvious hand crack. Climb this crack for several metres then move left past a bolt on thin face moves to enter a left facing corner. Climb the corner moving up

and right as it ends on devious holds to reach the semi-hanging belay.

**P7: 50 m, 5.11c or 5.10d/A0.** Step right and then climb to a roof on sustained climbing past bolts. Overcome the roof and make a long gently rising traverse to the right. After several bolts make a thin sequence to gain a rib defining the left edge of the hanging gully which “drains” the upper face. Climb a easy shallow groove which leans to the left to reach a bolted belay. **Note:** Due to weather considerations the first ascent team did not free this pitch, we used two bolts to overcome the roof above the belay. This went at 5.10d for two bolts then A0 for the next two. The 5.11c grade is an approximate rating for the pitch.

**P8:40 m, 4th class.** Continue up the easy groove topping out on a small buttress traverse left across the top and drop down 3 m to a bolted belay (semi-hanging).

**Descent:** Rappel from the belay at the top of pitch 8 slightly to the “Climbers” right. This rappel takes climbers to the belay at the top of **pitch 6**. Rappel the route from here except for the exception noted. **Caution:** Rappelling from pitch 5, the next rapp station is located roughly 40 m below. However this station in “**not**” on the route that you have just climbed. Note that his rappel is nearly all overhanging. The next “**rappel station**” is located slightly off to the “climbers” right and it becomes just possible to touch in at this point so watch for this belay (ring-bolts) and **don’t go past it!**

