

GOAT SLABS

The large cliff that extends from Coire Dubh to Goat Buttress Gully is known as Goat Slabs. It is the largest cliff in the valley and is around 600 m high. The most prominent features are two roughly horizontal pale gray bands (one near the top of the cliff and one near the bottom) and two waterstreaks (one in left-centre and another farther left). The waterstreaks normally dry up by midsummer or earlier.

Generally, the cliff is relatively low angle and broken, lacking obvious natural lines, but the rock is of reasonably good quality. It is fairly compact, however, and pitons are recommended for all routes. Perhaps with modern attitudes toward protection and what constitutes a line, some interesting bolted routes could be developed on certain sections of the cliff. The rounded buttress immediately left of Dream of Electric Sheep is one possibility. Although the climbs are long, all of them can be easily completed in a day. They have been used as easy season training climbs and as practice for long alpine routes. The current speed record was set by Sean Dougherty and Mark DeLeeuw in 1988 when three routes were climbed in a day! These were Coup-Jack, Verflixt and Dream of Electric Sheep.

Approach

Using the normal approach for the Goat Mountain climbing areas, follow the Nanny Goat trail though to the meadows between the line of cliffs and the long esker. From here, relatively open slopes lead up to the base of the climbs.

Descent

To return to the base of the cliff, the most convenient descent route from many of the climbs is to the south via the large gully of Coire Dubh. This is not straightforward, however, as the bottom has some tricky down-climbing on waterworn slabs. It is also possible to descend to the north via Goat Buttress Gully. A third option is to climb up to the ridge and descend left over Loder Peak to Highway 1A.

Coire Dubh 5.4

R. Allen & J. Martin, 1965

This climb begins in the gully at the left end of Goat Slabs and continues directly to the ridge top at a saddle above a wide, shallow bay. Coire Dubh is a good winter climb with ice pitches in the lower half.

At the base of the rock several possible lines can be followed into the gully, which soon narrows to a slabby, waterworn chute (5.4). The gully then widens out into a wide scree bowl with a steeper rock section above. The easiest line through the rock section follows a vague, left-facing corner toward the right (north) side of the bowl. An easy fifth class pitch is encountered near the bottom of this section, after that 4th class climbing leads to the top. A short distance to the south lies the bump of Loder Peak, from the top of which an easy walk down the ridge leads to Highway 1A.

Worst Route in the Rockies 350 m, 5.7

Goat Slabs

A Worst Route in the Rockies
B Sou'wester
C Coup-Jack
D China Syndrome
E Verflixt

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J North Gully
K Brownian Motion
L Twinkletoe



C. Perry & M. White, 1975

This aptly named route climbs an obvious slanting line near the south end of the cliff. Climb easy slabs up and right to gain a prominent, slanting crack system. Go up this on poor rock and continue above in the same general line. Higher up, a steep section allows access left to a prominent depression and hence to the top.

Sou'wester 400 m, 5.10a/b

T. Jones & P. Littlejohn, August 1976

Sou'wester climbs steep rock just left of the lower pitches of Coup-Jack and follows a line close to that route through the easier-angled upper section. Pitches 2, 3 and 4 use classic Rockies' sidesteps to avoid overhanging rock and so gain impressive positions.

- 1) 40 m, 5.7 From a high point in the scree slope, follow a blocky bedding plane up and right until it turns yellow.
 - 2) 45 m, 5.7 Move up and right to gain another crack system that leads up through two overhangs. Move left to belay.
 - 3) 30 m, 5.10a/b Climb the rib on the left with difficulty (the small wire and piton protection could be improved by the addition of a bolt).
 - 4) 45 m, 5.10a Climb the left-facing groove ahead to easier-angled ground.
- 5-11) 5.8 Above and left is a discontinuous corner system on whitish, water-run rock that is followed to the top.

Coup-Jack 500 m, 5.9

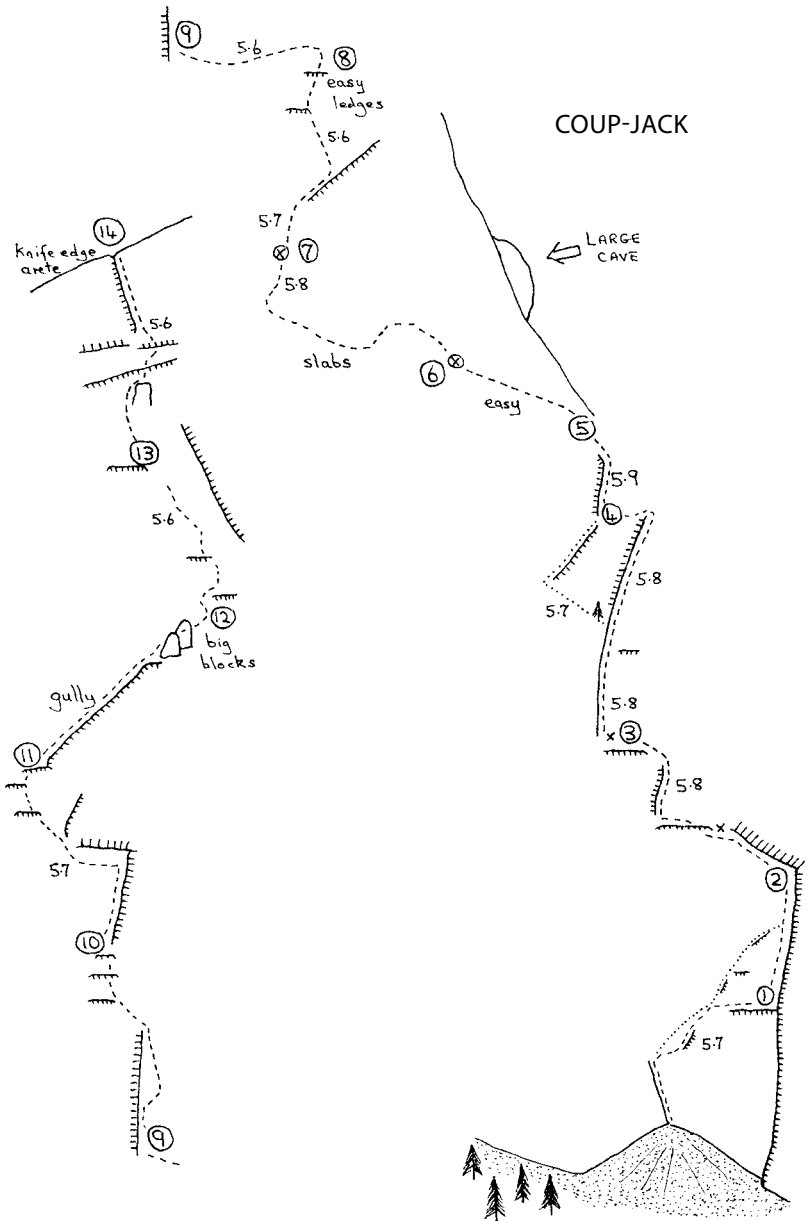
R. Howe, A. McKeith & I. Rowe, July 1974

Midway between the two waterfalls on Goat Slabs is a prominent cave-like feature set in a system of left-facing corners. This fine route follows corners and cracks almost to the cave, then trends left and finishes up slabs and walls. Parts of the climb are quite run-out by modern standards and the single bolt belay at the top of pitch 7 needs backing up. The climb sees little traffic and a good selection of pitons is still required.

Start about 20 m left of a left-facing corner capped by a large roof.

- 1) 45 m, 5.7 Climb up and then right past a short wall (or corner to the right) to a ledge that leads into the left-facing corner.
- 2) 35 m, 5.7 Climb the corner to the roof.
- 3) 40 m, 5.8 Traverse left under the roof to ledges and then climb an overhanging crack in a short corner. Move up and left to a piton belay at the base of another corner.
- 4) 30 m, 5.8 Make a few awkward moves up the corner and continue up to a ledge. Move up and then out left past a small tree to a short corner that leads to an obvious overhanging crack in a right-facing corner. Alternatively, continue from the ledge directly up the corner (5.8) and then move across left to the overhanging crack.
- 5) 10 m, 5.9 Climb the crack, which is well protected.
- 6) 40 m Move up and left over easy slabs and ledges, trending away from the main corner

COUP-JACK



system, to a single bolt belay in a shallow corner.

- 7) 40 m, 5.8 Make a long, poorly protected traverse left on smooth slabs, then climb a short steep wall and continue to a bolt belay.
- 8) 45 m, 5.7 A few thin moves lead to a right-trending ramp. Follow this until it is possible to climb up and left to easier ground.
- 9) 40 m Traverse left on easy slabs and ledges below a huge overhanging yellow corner to the foot of a right-facing gray corner.
- 10) 35 m, 5.5 Climb the corner, step left and continue to a ledge below a V-chimney.
- 11) 40 m, 5.7 Move up into the chimney and then traverse across the steep left wall about 5 m below a large roof. Climb up and right and belay in the first short gully.
- 12) 30 m Follow the gully easily up and right.
- 13) 35 m, 5.6 Climb steep slabs on the wall of a left-facing corner to a ledge.
- 14) 35 m, 5.6 Continue above on steep slabs, then move left and up to finish.

China Syndrome 460 m, 5.10a

S. Dougherty & J. Sevigny, 1989

Start 30 m right of Coup-Jack below a very obvious deep chimney that forms the right side of a large pinnacle.

- 1) 65 m, 5.6/7 Climb a groove in an arete past some vegetation to a ledge. Traverse right across a corner and move up easily to another ledge. Climb a corner for 5 m and then descend to the left into the base of the chimney.
- 2) 55 m, 5.7 Climb the chimney (loose rock) to a ledge at the top of the pinnacle. Move right up an easy ramp to a belay below a clean-cut dihedral with shattered flakes guarding its base.
- 3) 45 m, 5.10a Traverse right past this corner system and step down into another corner. Climb up this via a crack/flake system to ledges.
- 4) 50 m, 5.6/7 Climb up and left to twin cracks running through a small roof. Above the cracks, move left for 8 m into a prominent corner system. Climb this for 10 m to a belay 10 m below an ugly looking bulge.
- 5) 45 m, 5.9 Continue up the corner for a few metres and then traverse left along a ledge. At its end, step up on nice rock to some ledges. Climb the corner above (chossy at first) to a belay in a niche.
- 6) 45 m, 5.8 Make tricky moves up the corner until it peters out. Embark on the slab to the left, aiming for the upper left corner. Excellent climbing leads to a large sloping ledge below a very prominent, overhanging corner.
- 7) 45 m, 5.9 Traverse 20 m left across another slab to a bolt. Continue traversing left (very exposed) until it is possible to make a tricky move up to an easy ramp that leads back right above the overhanging corner. Continue up the corner to a stance.
- 8) 60 m, 5.7 Climb easily up and left to the top of a ramp. Follow an obvious loose crack up

and right for 15 m. Step back left to a bolt belay immediately below a wide crack behind a massive block.

- 9) 50 m, 5.7 Traverse right along a break to a ledge. Climb the groove above past a small roof to easier ground and the top.

Verflix 685 m, 5.7, A1

W. Batzhuber and U. Kallen, 1974

The route starts slightly left of the lowest part of the face in a gully and crack system and curves up to the right, aiming for a waterfall high on the face. This is the right-hand of the two waterfalls on Goat Slabs. The Grassman Route is commonly used as the preferred start (see comments in that description).

- 1) 45 m, 5.4 Climb up the gully.
- 2) 45 m, 5.6 Head up toward a smooth waterworn gully. When this becomes difficult, climb up left in a corner system and belay at its top.
- 3) 35 m, 5.5 Go up and left over a faint ridge into some cracks (15 m), then left and down to an obvious corner.
- 4) 45 m, 5.6 Climb an easy jam-crack, then go up the corner until it becomes difficult. Go left to a diagonal crack, follow it to the top of a corner and continue up an obvious chimney.
- 5) 45 m, 5.6, A1 Climb overhangs blocking the chimney to reach the top of a pillar. Climb 10 m, angle up left to a short steep wall and climb the wall (1 point of aid) to a good ledge.
- 6) 35 m, 5.4 Climb straight up on slabs, then go left into a corner and chimney.
- 7) 45 m, 5.6 Go up the corner over a steep section with overhangs; at the top, go right up a ramp to a stance.
- 8) 45 m, 5.6 Ascend 10 m, then step around to the right and go up to an arch. Exit on the left, then climb back right to a good ledge.
- 9) 45 m, 5.5 Go straight up 20 m and then traverse easily to the right. Climb a short wall and go right again to a small stance. From here, an obvious rock "ear" can be seen up and to the left.
- 10) 45 m, 5.7 Climb 35 m to a roof, traverse left 6 m on a slab to a crack and follow this 3 m to a stance.
- 11) 35 m, 5.6 Go up a bit, then drop left into a gully to reach a big scree scoop.
- 12-14) Follow the gully easily up right for about 100 m. At its end traverse right onto low angle slabs near the waterfall.
- 15) 45 m, 5.7 Above is a steep wall, the crux of the climb. Head for a small pillar and from its top climb left on small holds to an easy crack. Climb the crack and traverse right to a belay.
- 16) 35 m Climb easily up toward a tree in the exit crack and belay in a niche.
- 17) 40 m, 5.6 Climb over the niche and up to a steep groove. Climb the groove, then go up and right over slabs to reach the top of the face.

Grassman Route* 625 m, 5.7

E. Grassman & M. Sawyer, 1976

This climb is named for Eckhard Grassman, who died on the north face of Mount Edith Cavell. It follows a line close to and left of the big waterfall, then moves left to intersect Verflixt at the base of that route's tenth pitch. The Grassman Route is now usually climbed as the preferred start to Verflixt as it avoids the short section of aid and gives good, consistent climbing on a more logical line.

Start After scrambling up to the highest scree ledges, begin in an obvious gully and groove system a short distance left of the waterfall.

- 1-2) 100 m, 5.4 Climb two long and mostly easy pitches up the gully.
- 3-4) 90 m, 5.6 Move left and follow a discontinuous series of short corners and cracks to a tree on a large ledge behind a big rectangular pinnacle.
- 5) 35 m, 5.7 Climb the steep wall above and then slant right up a ledge to a tree belay.
- 6) 40 m, 5.6 Walk to the right, then slant left and up to a belay in a wide, shallow gully.
- 7) 30 m, 5.4 Traverse left on a ledge into the pale gray band. Climb up a few feet and belay.
- 8) 30 m, 5.6 Climb straight up to the stance at the base of the 10th pitch of Verflixt.

Dream of Electric Sheep 5.8

B. Greenwood & A. McKeith, 1971

This route has rarely been repeated and the line marked on the photo is approximate, except for the exit pitches. In general, it follows a shallow buttress in the central area of the cliff. The main feature of the route is a shallow, 90 m left-facing corner, with a dogleg to the right, in the centre of the buttress.

Start left of the dogleg corner where a gully can be seen leading up and right onto the buttress. An initial 12 m wall leads over a bulge (5.7) onto smooth slabs and then into the gully that is followed easily for three pitches to a ledge at the right end of a line of overhangs. The next four pitches, culminating in the crux, lead first up and right, then up and left to an area of ledges. An easy pitch and a loose wall on the left (5.3) lead to a crack about 30 m left of the corner. Above the crack (5.6) a ledge leads right to the corner, that is followed for about 60 m until it is possible to move out left into a smaller corner. Steep broken rock now leads to an obvious break in the upper light gray band that is climbed (5.5) to a broad scree ledge. Above the ledge a corner with a thin crack (5.6) is climbed to easier rock that leads up in two more pitches under an overhanging yellow arch to the finish.

Digital Sheep 5.9

S. Dougherty & J. Martin, 1988

This route was intended to climb a separate line on a small buttress to the right of Dream of Electric Sheep, but was forced left onto that route higher up.

Start midway between Dream of Electric Sheep and Mountaineer's Route.

Climb a pitch up a slabby face and an easy corner to a major ledge. Traverse right to a right-facing corner at the left side of a huge, shallow depression. Follow the corner for two pitches. Traverse right and climb up toward a short bulging wall that blocks access to the central portion of the cliff. Work up and right along a diagonal break below the bulging wall. This break could be followed to Mountaineer's Route; instead, traverse left at the first opportunity (5.9, poor protection) and move up to a ledge that slants down to the left. Follow the ledge left to a break and belay. Climb a long pitch up the break to a clean ledge. Follow the ledge left for about a rope length until it becomes a scree ledge. Continue left along ledges to reach Dream of Electric Sheep a short pitch below the "dogleg corner."

Mountaineer's Route 5.6

R. MacLachlan & J. Martin, 1981

To the right of the buttress followed by Dream of Electric Sheep is a shallow scoop. This rambling climb starts on a scree ramp that leads up right to a point below the shallow scoop. Climb one pitch up dark shattered rock (5.4) to a ledge, then move right and climb a slabby pitch (5.5) up the light gray band above to a major ledge system. The ledge is followed right for several pitches to prominent shattered pillars. Some short 5th class walls and traverses are encountered in this section. Climb moderate rock left of the pillars to a stand of conifers in a big scree bowl. Wander up and left to a large ledge below the upper light gray band, climbing this by an obvious left-slanting crack to another large ledge. Slightly farther left are the three exit pitches of Dream of Electric Sheep, which are followed to the top.

North Gully 5.8

J. Jones & J. Robson, 1967

Details of this, the first route on Goat Slabs, are lost. The route begins at a fairly obvious break and after a difficult first pitch leads more or less straight up on easier ground to the left end of a huge gully. This gully is at the base of the lower pale gray band. It then follows the gully (that is easy at first) up right for several pitches to a steep, difficult section and after breaking out on the left wall continues up easy rock to trees.

Brownian Motion 5.4

M. Bowen & J. Martin, 1969

This wandering climb has some enjoyable fourth class and easy fifth class pitches. Considerable variation is possible. Start at the only easy break near the right side of the cliff. After climbing up a few metres, make a long traverse left and then climb up to a large scree-filled gully below the lower pale gray band. This is the same gully used by the North Gully route. Follow the gully right to the first break in the pale gray band, then climb first up and right, then up and left for

several pitches in cracks and corners to a huge scree bowl with a few trees. From the top of the bowl, another corner system leads in two or three pitches to a scree ledge below the upper pale band. Walk right to a break in this band (it is possible to continue right and off the cliff from here), climb it, and then traverse back left to a shallow gully that is followed to the top of the cliff.

Twinkletoe 5.6

B. Budd, J. Martin & S. Slymon, September 1968

Start as for Brownian Motion but instead of traversing left, scramble up to a bowl with a slanting slab on the left.

- 1) 20 m, 5.2 Climb up left on the slab and belay around a corner.
- 2) 30 m, 5.3 Climb an inside corner on the left, then continue to an obvious belay stance.
- 3) Climb up broken rock to a large ledge below a large slab.
- 4) 30 m, 5.6 Climb the slab, trending toward the right, to a small stance (poor protection).
- 5) 35 m, 5.4 Traverse left about 12 m to a slanting, blocky ledge. Climb this to a crack in the smooth wall on the left, continue up the crack, then traverse left to a tree belay.
- 6) 25 m Follow broken rock with a very smooth wall to the left to a small stance.
- 7) 30 m Traverse right and up into an obvious chimney.
- 8) 35 m, 5.5 From the chimney, traverse a few metres right, then climb up slabby rock past a crack to a steep wall. Traverse around a corner on the left to a tree belay.
- 9) 20 m, 5.6 Follow an obvious inside corner on the left to a ledge.
- 10) Climb diagonally right over broken rock to a large tree.
- 11) 35 m, 5.6 Make a descending traverse right, then climb up to an obvious overhanging wide crack that is followed to easier ground.
- 12) A short scramble leads to the trees.