

MT HECTOR - APOLLO (SOUTH RIDGE) - 5.10a

- 3+ hours off-trail approach.
- 11 pitches, 16 rappels.
- All pitches require gear placements.

NO MEDIA OR SOCIAL MEDIA PLEASE

Please do not identify the route in the media or in social media posts. The approach goes through delicate vegetation and prime wildlife habitat. Let's keep the crowds down to keep environmental impacts minimal.

NOTES

- This route is an alpine climb. It feels like a combination of Kahl Wall on Yamnuska and the West Ridge of Deltaform. You need to feel comfortable on those types of route before attempting this one.
- There are runouts and loose rock. Snow, ice, and wet rock may be present for much or all of the summer.
- It is best to wait for the route to be completely clear of snow as the highest pitch (5.9 at 3400 m) will be wet or icy with snow on the peak. A fall on this pitch has resulted in a serious injury and a dangerous rescue.
- Route finding may be difficult for some parties. It is often cold and windy and may feel harder than the grade. 5.12 climbers have failed on some pitches due to the cold.
- It is recommended to do this as a one day ascent. It is illegal and unethical to bivouac in the meadows on the approach. A Banff National Park bivouac permit is required to spend the night at the non-vegetated col below the route (space for one tent, water available all summer).

GEAR

- One 60 m rope
- Cams from 10.5 mm to 85 mm

PARK

A small pullout lies about 14 km north of the Highway 93N off ramp just outside Lake Louise. This is the second of two pullouts within 100 m of each other and is a few metres south of a small stream (hidden from the road but audible).

APPROACH

Follow a faint trail on the climber's right (south) side of the drainage, near the bank of the stream, which is usually audible. From a small meadow amongst larch trees at 2270 m, trend up and left towards the base of the S Ridge of Hector, eventually reaching a large meadow at treeline. Continue up rocks to a col (bivy spot), and then walk up the lower part of the ridge to where it narrows at 3000 m. Harness up here. Walk the narrow and exposed ridge across a drawbridge, then go left of a small outcrop to a notch at the base of the first large, steep step. There is an anchor in the notch; tie in and start climbing!

CLIMB

All pitches end at a bolted anchor.

1. Chaos. 5.10a, 30 m. Mixed.

- Small, brittle holds on the steep wall lead past bolts.
- At the end of the bolts trend left and up past cracks to easier ground.

2. Gaia. 5.7, 20 m. Gear.

- Climb up the face a few metres and then left into a corner.
- Pass the rap anchor at the top of the corner to a bolt belay at the base of a grey wall.

3. Ananke. 5.7, 55 m. Mixed.

- Climb to the top of the small pinnacle immediately left of the anchor.
- Gear and bolts lead to a short, loose, left-facing corner.
- Climb the corner and on the ledge above it step right to a hidden bolt.
- Go up the loose wall past a ledge and rap anchor, and climb the bolted wall above.

4. Cronus. 5.6, 35 m. Gear.

- Move the anchor to a large block across the terrace (sling anchor, no bolts).
- Climb the wide crack right of the chimney, then easier ground to the anchor.

Walk past the radio repeater station and find a faint trail on the left side of the ridge. Walk along this until you can scramble easily to an upper ledge and then go back right towards the crest of the ridge (cairn). Find a bolt anchor on the west side of the ridge.

5. Aphrodite. 5.9, 40 m. Mixed.

- Climb up and left past bolts and gear placements to finish in an overhanging corner.
- Be careful of a jammed block below the corner, it shifts.

Note the rap chain on a block to the left of the belay, you will use this on the descent. Scramble across a large ledge and up the ridge to an anchor at the base of the next steep wall, beside a small tower.

6. The Gorgon. 5.6, 60 m. Mixed.

- Past a bolt to a corner on the left.
- Climb past a rap anchor at the top of the corner.
- Continue in a loose gully and exit left past a bolt.

Scramble up the ridge to where it steepens, walk left along an exposed ledge and find a bolt anchor.

7. The Titanomachy. 5.7, 30 m. Mixed.

- Climb an easy break on the left to bolts on a steeper wall.
- Follow the bolts up and then right to the top of a pedestal.

8. The Gigantomachy. 5.10a, 30 m. Mixed.

- Climb the crack to bolts on a brittle grey wall below a yellow roof.
- Pull the roof and trend up and left above.
- Not recommended to combine pitches 7 & 8.

9. Icarus. 5.6, 60 m. Mixed.

- Climb to a low angle bowl.
- Ignore rap anchor on right and continue up and a bit left to a bolt on a rib.
- Climb to the notch above.

10. Paris. 4th, 30m. Bolts.

- Walk left along an exposed ledge (bolts).
- Gain an upper ledge.

11. Zeus. 5.9, 60 m. Mixed.

- Bolts in a corner lead to a second corner with a bolt at the top.
- Face climb left to a hand crack.
- At the top of the crack ignore the rap anchor to right and continue up and a bit left on easier but looser ground.

Scramble along the exposed, loose ridge to the summit. There is an anchor at the top of a very short step part way along.

Descent info on the next page.

DESCENT

- 16 rappels (one 60m rope) and scrambling.
- All directions assume facing into the mountain.
- There are some long rappels, tie knots in the ends of the rope!

Scramble down the summit ridge, rappelling or down climbing (anchor) the short step.

R1: 28m from the chain anchor at the top of P11 to a chain on the right above the hand crack.

R2: 28m to the higher ledge and the chain on the right, which is a bit high.

R3 (or downclimb): 10m to the lower ledge, self belay and walk south to the chain in the notch.

R4: 29m to a chain on the far right.

R5: 29m to a chain on the right.

R6: 29m to a chain on a pedestal.

R7: 25m to a ledge and 2 bolt anchor on the right.

Scramble east under the wall then down and back up to a flat spot. The next anchor is hidden below the edge.

R8: 20m to a ledge, then walk and self belay to the anchor above the next cliff.

R9: 30m down a short, steep wall and then over easy ground.

Walk down to the large boulder on the flat ledge. Chain on the west side of the boulder.

R10: 21m to a chain on a small, exposed ledge - don't miss it.

R11: 16m free hanging to the lower large ledge.

Walk around the corner past the repeater building to the next anchor below the edge, above the cliff to the east.

R12: 31m to a large ledge, make sure to swing a bit left to get to the higher part of the ledge, don't rap off the end of the rope.

Walk across the talus to the east, the chain is below the edge.

R13: 20m down the ridge to a chain on a ledge.

R14: 25 m down a steep wall to the east and an exposed ledge. Walk and self belay left to a 2 bolt anchor (rope can be pulled from here).

Walk south a few metres to a chain hidden below the edge.

R15: 15m down the corner to a chain on the right.

R16: 25 m down the west side to a large ledge. Walk a few meters around the corner to the bottom of P1.

Walk down the way you came, or you can shortcut to the meadows by going straight down steep scree and talus from the gear up spot.

ABOUT THE NAMES

- Hector: Hector was a warrior-hero from Troy, brother of Paris who eloped with Helen, which started the Trojan war.
- Apollo: During the Trojan war Achilles killed Hector. Paris killed Achilles, but only through the divine intervention of Apollo (one of the Greek Olympian gods), who directed Paris' arrow to strike Achilles in the heel (which was the only part of his body that missed getting dipped into the river Styx by his mother when he was a baby, making him immortal, or nearly so). So Achilles may have been more powerful than Hector, but Apollo kicks Achilles' ass. Get it?
- Chaos: The primordial Greek gods were born from the void of Chaos - literally it means "chasm". You'll see why it was called this when you stand at the base of this pitch.
- Gaia: Was born of Chaos and is the ancestral mother of all life. But she was no pushover - check out what she did to her husband Uranus. Ouch.
- Ananke: Daughter of Gaia, the "personification of inevitability, compulsion and necessity". It was inevitable that my compulsion would necessitate a pitch like this.
- Cronus: Youngest of the Titans, he overthrew his father Uranus (that guy got no respect) and ruled during the mythological Golden Age.
- Aphrodite: The most beautiful of the Greek goddesses and the best pitch of the route.
- The Gorgon: A Gorgon is a woman of horrifying visage, with snakes for hair, and those who looked at her turned to stone (Medusa was a Gorgon).
- The Titanomachy: A ten year long battle between the Titans and the Olympians. The Titans lost.
- The Gigantomachy: The mythical battle between Olympian gods and the Giants (Gigantes), for supremacy of the cosmos. Guess what? The Giants lost.
- Icarus: A victim of hubris. He became over-confident and flew too close to the sun, which melted the wax holding his wings together. Fell to his death. I kind of felt like Icarus when first climbing this pitch, and then looking at what came next.
- Paris: Homer's Iliad casts Paris as unskilled and cowardly, hence the need for Apollo to help him kill Achilles.
- Zeus: King of the Gods and he doesn't let you forget it.

FA

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Carla Demyen, Aaron Beardmore, Margie Smith, Tim Johnson, Marco Delesalle, Mike Stuart, Mark Klassen

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