

done the lock-offs, I heard Tommy yelling; knowing that we now had it! The most continuously difficult free line up El Cap, The Muir.

NICK SAGAR, *Nova Scotia*

*Half Dome-Mt. Watkins-El Capitan Blitz.* In October Dean Potter and I became the first to climb three Grade VI Yosemite walls within 24 hours. We started on Half Dome's 2,000-foot Northwest Face. Approaching via the Death Slabs we arrived at the base at 7:00 a.m., rested, ate, and hydrated. We decided on a midmorning start in order to have daylight on The Nose, at the end of their marathon 24 hours. Blasting at 10:15 a.m. with a handful of cams and stoppers, I led the first of two blocks. Clipping only fixed anchors and other fixed gear, we simulclimbed to the Robbins Traverse. Potter swung into the lead as I prepared to jumara a fixed line. As I readied the jumars I hastily slapped the jug on the rope but neglected to engage the trigger. I watched it cascade 1,000 feet down the face. Undeterred, we barreled up the Zigzags, passing a party of Japanese, and topped the route in 2 hours and 12 minutes. We coiled the cord, shoed our feet, and sprinted down the cables and back to the base.

After recovering the dropped jumara from a bush and deeming it okay, we hastily descended the Death Slabs and jogged four miles up Tenaya Canyon to our next Grade VI, the South Face of Mt. Watkins. This would be our second time on the South Face, and again we planned on only two blocks to cover the 2,000+-foot wall. As the wall became shady I took the first lead, as it favored my free/aid style. We switched leads at the base of the crux aid pitch, as Potter grabbed the rack and launched into the remaining predominantly free pitches. We donned our headlamps on the last pitch, topping out in 5:15, creating a record in the process. Even though we had walked to the top of the formation the previous night to stash water and shoes, we became disoriented as we ran out to Highway 120, where Potter's rig was waiting. We burned a half-hour of precious time locating the faint trail. Upon reaching the van I reracked, Potter drove, and both of us devoured as many calories as possible in the 45-minute respite. Parking in El Cap Meadow under a star-filled sky, we had less than 10 hours remaining to ascend the longest of the walls. We chose The Nose as the finishing leg because of our familiarity with the route, this being our third time on it, and for its proximity to the road.

A team of Koreans was at the start of the first pitch just after midnight but kindly yielded the right-of-way. The Nose required four blocks, with me leading the first, to the pendulum at the top of Sickle Ledge. Due to extreme exhaustion, simulclimbing was kept to a minimum, and the majority of the route was short-fixed. With a #1 Camalot as the biggest piece Potter led the Stove Leg cracks, finishing his block on top of The Boot. In the middle of the Great Roof pitch the sky began to lighten as I closed in on Camp V. We passed a party of three at the Glowering Spot, and with Potter in the lead we simulaided out the summit headwall bolt ladder and collapsed on top. In 23 hours and 45 minutes we had climbed more than 80 pitches and 7,000 vertical feet.

TIM O'NEILL

*El Capitan, Nose, speed record.* On October 15 Dean Potter and I went sub-four hours on El Cap's 3,000-foot Nose, cleaving 23 minutes off the record of 4:22, set nearly a decade ago by Peter Croft and Hans Florine. This was our fourth ascent of the route together but our first time climbing it in daylight. We alternately led, in four leader blocks. With me taking the first block