

7 South Buttress of Wankers Wall 40' 5.8

Jeff Pheasant, Mike Hartrich, May 1974.

Start at the anchor on the left. Move up and left into a shallow scoop. Zigzag up, eventually moving back right to reach the anchor of The Ninth Wave. For a longer pitch, instead of traversing right to the anchor of The Ninth Wave, keep heading up the slab, staying to the right of Slabs Direct until a short traverse left leads to the bolted anchor at the top of pitch 1 of that route.

8 Stop if You Dare 140' 5.8

This pitch is squeezed into the narrow strip of rock between Slabs Direct and the routes on The Ninth Wave. Runout, but on nice rock. Start at the anchor of Slabs Direct. Step out right and climb up to the first bolt. Make crux moves past this bolt, then climb the gradually-easing slab for 80' to the next bolt. Easier climbing leads past another bolt to the anchor. There are two more pitches above the anchor, above which it is possible to connect with Standard Route in various ways.

9 Slabs Direct 1080' 5.7 ★★

Paul Ross, Ben & Marion Wintringham, June 15, 1973.

Single rack to 2"

This is a very direct route that provides the fastest way up the slabs. As usual, it is very runout in places. However, the hardest moves are usually reasonably close to protection.

The route starts from a bolted anchor at the left end of The Ninth Wave, which is the steep swell of smooth rock to the left of Beginner's Route and about 200' above the ground. The most straightforward way to reach this anchor is to pad straight up the slab from directly below the left end of The Ninth Wave, unprotected 5.4. It is also possible to traverse out right from The Launch Pad on Standard Route, easier climbing but less obvious.

1. 100' 5.7 From the anchor, make thin moves to reach a left-facing flake (pin). Layback up the flake and make a precarious step onto the slab above. Pad up the slab to a shallow groove and continue to an anchor below a swell.

2. 160' 5.5 Climb over the swell (b) and run it out up an easier slab to an anchor.

3. 140' 5.4 Continue up the slab for 40' to reach the arch of Standard Route. The rest of the pitch follows Standard Route to Lunch Ledge; layback up into a small arch above the main arch, and move immediately left to good holds. Continue up the crack on the left side of the huge block, past a small tree to Lunch Ledge, the large ledge in the middle of the final overlaps.

4. 100' 5.7 A great pitch. From the right end of lunch ledge, climb up 20' to reach a left-slanting corner. Climb the corner to a pin, then step out right onto a smooth slab (b). Make a delicate traverse up and right to join the ramp of Standard Route. Follow the ramp back left to a steep, right-facing corner. Go up the corner (pin) and continue for a few moves left to belay on a cramped ledge below the final overlap.

5-7. 380' 5.2 Finish up Standard Route.

Standard Route is perhaps the classic route of the area, finding a path of least resistance up the middle of The Slabs. Mostly straightforward friction climbing leads to the final overlaps. A very devious crux pitch then threads its way through the overlaps and smooth slabs to gain easy slabs and dikes, up which the route finishes. The route finding near the top is rather complicated, and novice leaders are warned to pay

close attention to the route description.

Standard Route is a very popular climb. While there are many variations on the lower slabs, these all converge at Lunch Ledge, often creating a huge traffic jam that can keep parties waiting, sometimes for hours. On busy weekends, climbers are encouraged to check out some of the routes on the left-hand side of the slabs as an alternative. Routes such as Wedge (5.7), Sea of Holes (5.8), and Stadtmüller-Griffin (5.6) are good climbs that see only a fraction of the traffic of Standard Route.

10 Standard Route 1080' 5.5 ★★★

Robert Underhill, Kenneth Henderson and others explored this part of the slabs in the late 1920s. A fixed rope, placed from above, was used to bypass the difficulties of The Brown Spot Pitch. This section had a legitimate ascent on July 2, 1932 when Leland Pollock led an AMC party up the route, free climbing The Brown Spot Pitch.

Single rack to 3", Tricams, long slings.

GPS: N44 03.269 W71 09.915

In the center of The Slabs is a large, right-leaning arch that starts 300' above the ground.

Directly below the arch is a large, down-sloping ledge, about 100' above the ground, The Launch Pad. Start at the base of the cliff at a small clearing to the left of The Launch Pad.

1. 90' 5.0 Walk/climb up and right following a shallow scoop in the slab to reach the left side of The Launch Pad. An anchor can be made at the right end of the ledge, in a small flake.

2. 110' 5.1 Climb up and slightly right, passing several flakes, then up a slab to a big hole with an anchor, The Toilet Bowl.

3. 150' 5.2 Climb straight up to a bolt, then slightly left to the base of a left-arching flake, with a good thread for protection. Layback up the flake, then go up the slab above to a bolt anchor on a ledge covered in quartz crystals.

4. 100' 5.3 Climb over the steeper swell above the ledge to reach a line of pockets. Follow the pockets up and right; Tricams or sideways nuts work well to protect this section. When the pockets end, pad directly up the slab to a small, sloping ledge with a thread anchor in the main arch.

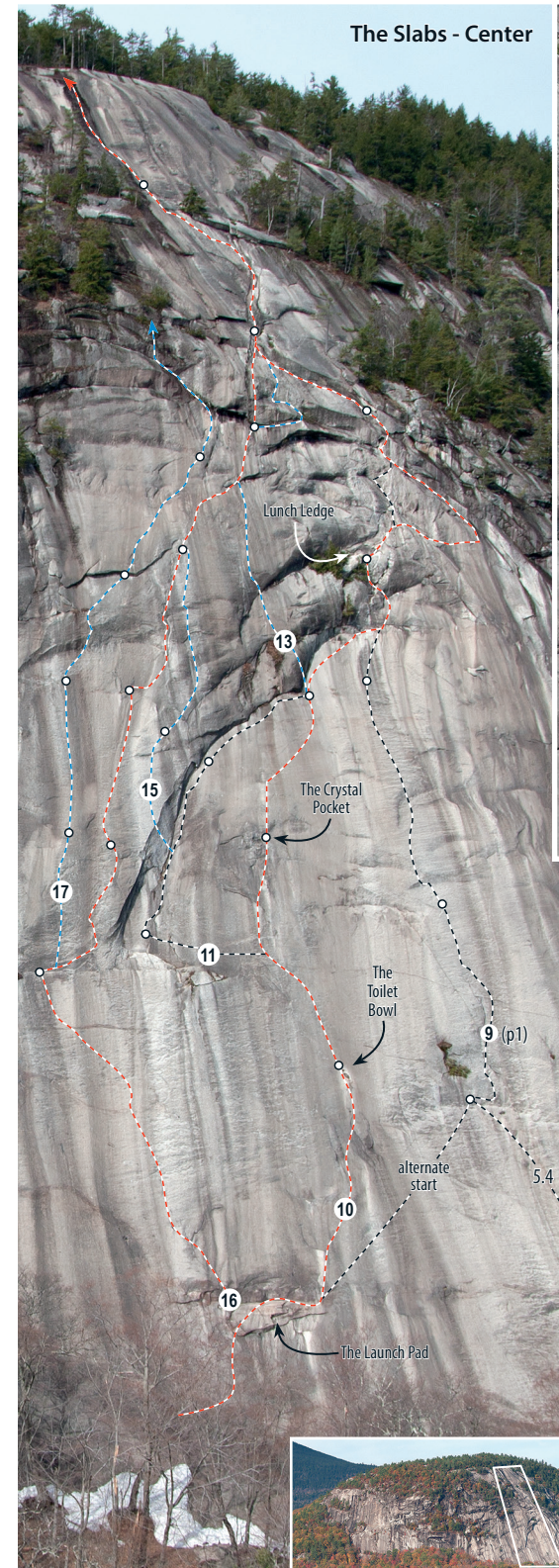
5. 130' 5.4 Follow the main arch up and right for about 60' until it is possible to layback up into a small arch above the main arch. Don't continue up and right in this arch, but instead move immediately out left to good holds. Continue up the crack to the left of the huge block, past a small pine tree to a big ledge, Lunch Ledge. This is a great place to enjoy the view, eat lunch, and watch other parties have epics on the crux pitch above.

6. 120' 5.5 The infamous Brown Spot Pitch. Extending your protection with slings helps a lot on this long, winding pitch. From the right end of the ledge, climb up 20', then move right across a smooth slab to a bolt. Step down to a tiny quartz 'ledge' which is followed rightward to another bolt. Move past the bolt to reach a polished left-leaning ramp (to avoid rope drag, some parties belay on some old pins a few feet up the ramp). Continue up the ramp for 40' to a steep, right-facing corner. Go up the corner (pin) and continue for a few moves left to belay on a cramped ledge below the final overlap. Phew!

7. 80' 5.2 Follow the overlap to its left end, then step left to a prominent dike that is followed to a good ledge beside an old tree stump.

8. 150' 5.2 Continue up the dike for 100' to a large overlap. Move left around the overlap and continue up to a small ledge.

9. 150' 5.1 Continue up the dike, past a bolt, to the top.



The Slabs - Center



Close up of The Brown Spot Pitch on Standard Route

There are many ways of climbing Standard Route. The above description was chosen as perhaps the best, or at least the most straightforward option. However, the original ascent followed a slightly different line, following the back of the great arch to the left of pitches 3 and 4 of the normal route.

11 Standard Route - The Original Way 1160' 5.5 ★★★

Single rack to 3", long slings.

This variation is a bit more awkward than the modern route, and is more often wet. However, in dry conditions, it has excellent climbing and adds a bit of variety to the route. Start from the Toilet Bowl, at the end of pitch 2 of Standard Route.

3. 120' 5.2 Friction up the slab to a bolt at 30'. Angle left to reach the right end of a long ledge. Protect your second here, then walk left along the ledge to a bolt anchor below the arch.

4. 150' 5.3 Follow the arch to an uncomfortable hanging belay just above an overhang.

5. 60' 5.3 Continue up the arch (often wet), or the unprotected slab to its right, to rejoin the regular route at the thread belay at the top of pitch 4. Continue up pitch 5 of the regular route. (📍 p. 190)