

THE 36<sup>TH</sup>  
CHAMBER *OF THE*  
WINDTOWER



**Climbing season:** Mid June to Late August. Best climbed during the hottest days of the summer. The avalanche hazard at the base is quite high until most of the snow has melted. There are also cornices at the top of the wall that you should not climb under. The cornices may last longer than the snow at the base, and you can see them (with binoculars) from the intersection of the #1 highway and the "George Biggy Sr Rd" at Dead Man's Flats.

**Approach:** Approximately 75 min from the car to the base. From the West Wind Pass Trailhead on the Smith Dorrien Trail, hike to the West Wind Pass (35 to 45 mins.) Follow the trail to the summit of the Windtower for a few minutes, then head uphill to an area on the ridge with a number of large boulders and a bunch of old lumber (would be a good spot to bivy if cleaned up.) 15 mins from the pass. From here, continue up the ridge and down climb into a gully (second class.) Traverse the gully and continue along the base of the wall until you get to a very wide roof. The climb starts up a large boulder on the right hand side of the roof.

**Gear:** 19 draws, including 6 single slings. Either an 80m rope, or a shorter lead rope and tag line (tagging a bag is recommended.) One thick or two thin puffy jackets per person. Bosun chair and/or portaledge recommended for projecting the upper pitches.

**P1:** *37m 11c 15 bolts.* Start up a large boulder under the roof. Back clean the first bolt, long sling for the second. After clipping the third, wiggle the rope so the long sling can be reached, then unclip from it. Either climb left at the third bolt on hard to find holds, or go straight up with some reachy moves on smaller (but easier to find) holds. Use long slings for most of the traverse in the second half of the pitch. Can rap this pitch with a single 60.

**P2:** *25m 11a 11 bolts.* The line wanders a bit, just climb whatever looks easiest .

**P3:** *33m 11d 17 bolts.* A crux at the start and end of this pitch. The bolt at the first crux is a bit difficult to reach.

**P4:** *27m 10d 16 bolts.* A few nice hand jams on this pitch. It used to be a finger crack before I cleaned out a bunch of flakes. Step gingerly onto the big block before traversing left around the corner. Back fix when rappelling.

**P5:** *38m 12a 18 bolts.* A mid-height crux with enjoyable climbing throughout. Rapping with a single 70m rope is unlikely to go well.

**P6:** *28m 11c 12 bolts.* The second bolt is a bit high, so I might add another. A delicate slab section is followed by techy climbing on large flakes.

**P7:** *15m 12c 11 bolts.* Climb a thin flake corner to a good rest. Deadpoint to a high thumbdercling/pinch then gain some large (but poorly oriented) holds for a difficult traverse. At the end of the traverse on the roof jug, either double-hand-foot match and rock up using left crimps... or campus to a one-pad edge. Feels more like 13a to me, #tyson-the-sandbagger. Can rappel to P6 belay from here with 2 ropes or a single 80m.

**P8:** *22m 13a 17 bolts.* Start up a slippery corner then grab crimps at the top of the orange block. Long sling on the third bolt, back-clean the first two bolts, and the fourth bolt. Overhanging pumpy climbing and a lot of searching for hand and footholds. A sidepull crimp helps you reach a big flat ledge at the crux at the top of the pitch. Rappelling requires a lot of back fixing. Fixed rope recommended for projecting.

**P9:** *37m 13b 19 bolts.* A hard boulder problem from bolts two to four. A lot of body tension and a bit reachy. Look for holds to the right of the bolt line. Feels harder than 13b to me. 5.11+ climbing to the anchor. Rap with an 80m rope or two ropes.

**P10:** *20m 12c 13 bolts.* Cool big moves on rock that is not as great as you wish it was. Use a high left sidepull and high feet to get to the final bolt. Back fix frequently when rappelling.

**P11:** *20m 11d 14 bolts.* Techy slab trickery on somewhat crumbly rock. Back clean or skip bolts to avoid drag. Back fix frequently when rappelling.

**P12:** *30m 12c 14 bolts.* Move left from the belay on underclings before climbing up and back to the corner. Fun 3D corner climbing until the top of the arch. Traverse left on the face below the roof on crimps, then look for holds on the right of the bolt line above the roof. Back fix at least three times when rappelling.

**P13:** *31m 11b 16 bolts.* Fun climbing on blocky holds and incuts. Climb carefully on easy terrain at the top. Back fix if rappelling.

**P14:** *30m 11c 15 bolts.* Move up, then around the arete to the right. Use compression to overcome the first roof, and a hidden undercling to overcome the final roof. No rappel anchors at the top.

**P15:** *15m 4th 6 bolts.* One move off the belay, then easy scrambling. No rappel anchors at the top.

**The name:** Inspired by the film, *The 36th Chamber of Shaolin*, the 36th chamber of the Windtower is a “class” for teaching people how to build and climb large sport routes themselves. Here are 35 chambers I had to face on this route, and what I learned from them.

1. Back cleaning draws can greatly reduce rope drag (pitches 1 and 8)
2. Pull down on the holds, not out
3. Some of the belays have an extra bolt to keep gear/people from getting too bunched up
4. If you squeeze the rock hard in the upper half of the wall (pitch 12,) you may squeeze oil out onto your fingers. Put extra chalk on the holds to keep the oil off of you
5. When in doubt, traverse
6. Back fix draws when rappelling steep or traversing pitches, have the second clean them off on the way down
7. The bolts on the last two pitches are fairly close together so you can find them by headlamp and A0 quite a bit instead of rapping in the dark
8. When rappelling, put your backpack on a long sling attached to your belay loop (not on your back, and definitely not on the back of your harness)
9. When jugging, also put your backpack on a long sling attached to your belay loop
10. Tag a bag and haul it up; friends don't let friends climb with a backpack
11. Tucking a portaledge under a roof offers shelter from rockfall
12. A bosun chair is great for long belays when the stance is poor
13. Clear your gear loops before sitting in a bosun chair, or else things are going to become accidentally unclipped
14. Fixed lines on the crux pitches make it a lot easier to project them, since they are a bit of a pain to rappel
15. When fixing ropes, rebelay frequently to avoid abrasion from sharp edges

16. With fixed ropes, use a few deviations to keep the rope against the cliff so jugging is faster
17. Use an auto-locker for your grigri for fixed lines, but use one that is not awkward to open one handed
18. For jugging, use a single foot loop that snugs onto your shoe with an elastic strap. Every time your foot comes out, you lose a lot of time
19. If you use a ladder with multiple rungs, they will frequently get snagged and tangled
20. When bolting in steep terrain on rappel, tensioning off of an upside down hook can help keep you in to the wall to drill easier
21. When bolting traverses, you can try to use a hook sideways to stabilize yourself while drilling
22. If you can not hook, use a short quarter-inch bolt to stabilize yourself if needed, it is not worth putting in extra full size bolts, or overreaching and risking a crooked bolt
23. Cleaning loose rock with an old technical ice tool is significantly faster than cleaning with a crowbar, also, they clip to your harness much more easily
24. If cleaning with an old ice tool, still bring a proper hammer, otherwise it can be difficult to tell if the rock is solid or not
25. Cliffs that are covered in large sections of loose rock can still clean up well if you are willing to put the time in (assuming there is solid rock under there somewhere)
26. Do not use your drill to clean loose rock, but do use it to level the rock under a bolt hanger if needed
27. The air pump for cleaning out holes works great for blowing dirt off holds (up to 10x as fast as only brushing the dirt off of them)
28. Rotate through your cleaning tools: Pry everything you can reach, brush, blow the dirt off, then move to the next section
29. Clean the rock top-down whenever possible, otherwise you will have to brush the dirt off multiple times
30. Rock chips will fall into your jumar and prevent them from locking up
31. On a cold wall, tuck your pants into your socks to keep updrafts at bay
32. Hiking poles help a lot when you are walking on loose terrain with a heavy pack
33. Long days on the wall maximize the ratio of development time to driving/hiking time, but plan to rest for a day or two after
34. Eating protein, sugar, and electrolytes at the car is very important for recovery
35. Be persistent. It will take one to three days per pitch to bolt and clean, depending on rock quality and pitch length

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