
Mount Toll - 01/23/09

Posted by jeffmoski - 2009/01/24 13:59

With a long warm spell and plenty of sunshine Ben, Pete, Dave and I decided that a 'sunny Friday' ski tour was in store. Expecting to get well above treeline we headed towards the Brainard Lakes Trail Head to ski a SouthEast feature of of Mt. Toll (12,998). The tour began on the road, as we shortly found ourselves at the Mitchell Lakes Trail Head. From here we meandered through the woods and reached the drainage towards Mitchell breaking trail through the gully. At the Lake we steered more or less west, over knolls and shelves reaching the far side of this remote Indian Peaks basin. Shortly after Blue Lake the first section of the couloir leading to Mount Toll came into view. It was snowing hard and visibility was low, but after digging a quick pit, we found a bomber mid-pack, and were convinced it would be a great day. Zig zagging up the couloir I made a series of steep switch-backs finally topping out at a flat plateaued section of the climb. The others followed close behind and by this time the final rise of Toll was in sight. Coverage was looking great, but with some cross-loading going on we took one-at-a-time precautions crossing below the large slope. We stayed more-or-less lookers left of the slope, near the scree field with a steep skin track. About mid-way up we moved into the middle of the slope to dig a pit. A well bonded, consolidated and very large mid-pack left our main concern with the fresh deposits ~4-6 inches on the surface. After a compression test of 13 taps from the shoulder a QT 3 sheer was produced with the top-most layer. A little tender but grippy. After pretty much slamming on the column with all kinds of force we found a ~25 inches down QT 1 sheer. The group agreed to stick to our plan of gaining the ridge and then assessing the conditions for managing the ridge line to the summit. Topping out on this section of the climb we ate a quick bite and began to make our final move to the summit. Quickly we ran into a monster of a wind drift perched at the top of our run, posing a problem of making it to the summit.. do to the likely-hood of a fracture on this southern aspect creaming us into the jagged rocks surrounding the divide. With heavy snow moving in, everyone was quite alright with the descent from our high point ~12,750, so we de-skinned and started down. What ensued was an epic mid-winter line, in the gorgeous Indian Peaks, a mere forty minute drive from Boulder. The snow was dense, but powdery fresh and we took this section of the couloir one at a time through three pitches, stopping at safe zones. After this, we traversed quickly Northeast to drop the first couloir we had climbed up. The turns softened here and provided a fun banana sling-shot shape, which we enjoyed in utter dis-belief. Yes, it was in fact January. Approaching Blue Lake we decided to search for the two couloirs we had seen coming off a rocky feature upon the approach. Our first attempt to find these, proved lacking and we skirted back towards our skin track. After traveling a little distance we figured we were early and the next rocky feature would hold the long-lost couloirs. Edging, bootpacking, and traversing we eventually gained the shallow high point and scoped the lines from above. The skiers left couloir we had seen on the way in, looked most appetizing and Dave named it the "Bambino" due to it's challenging ability to be approached. The snow was only getting better. Deep turns were made by all in a much larger line than expected ~500 ft. Not a bad way to finish off the day. From there we made the slog back towards the road. "If you're not slogging you're not trying hard enough" Dave would remind us. The road was longer than I remembered it, probably in a daze skinning in. However, eventually.. and I mean eventually we reached the last downhill to the gate and a glimmer of sunset was seen in the clouds as the car came into view.

Photos- Mt. Toll

http://www.backcountryclub.org/1/index.php?option=com_expose&Itemid=60

Unofficial Stats

Mt. Toll: 12,988 ft

High Point: ~12,750 ft

Total Distance: 10-12 miles

Overall Elevation: ~5,400 ft

Slope Angles-

Descent 1: ~30-35, Descent 2: ~27-33, Bambino: ~30-33

Re:Mt. Toll - 01/23/09

Posted by jeffmoski - 2009/01/24 14:19

The Google Earth Story...

http://www.backcountryclub.org/1/images/fbfiles/files/Mt_Toll_20090123.kmz

Re:Mount Toll - 01/23/09

Posted by primomo - 2009/01/25 19:43

Nice job fellas. Inspiration to check that area out some more...

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Re:Mount Toll - 01/23/09

Posted by dmandave - 2009/01/27 23:26

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http://lh3.ggpht.com/_aaiL9yC9kCc/SX_3kU4iIII/AAAAAAAAFOY/rHvjQfun_Ho/s720/P1020678.JPG

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