

Cave Boulder Guide.

by Zach Bramel

Problems

- Cave Left V0
- Cave Left Sit V6
- Cave Direct V3
- Midget V5
- Midget Sit V7
- Midget Sit Low V9
- Cave Right V7
- Liquid Swords V7
- Liquid Swords Low V9
- Cave Traverse V8
- Cave End V1
- Oxygen Cocktail V9
- Cave Crack V4
- Cave Left Sit into Cave Direct V6
- Cave Left Sit into Midget V9
- Cave Left Sit into Cave Right V8
- Cave Left Sit into Cave Crack V9
- Alt-Left V10
- Cave Direct Into Cave Left V3
- Cave Direct into Midget V6
- Cave Direct into Cave Right V6
- Midget Sit into Cave Direct V6
- Midget Sit Low into Cave Direct V8
- Midget Sit into Cave Left V6
- Midget Sit Low into Cave Left V8
- Midget Sit into Cave Right (High) V7
- Midget Sit into Cave Right (Low) V7
- Midget Sit Low into Cave Right (High) V9
- Midget Sit Low into Cave Right (Low) V9
- Cave Crack into Cave Left V6
- Cave Crack into Cave Direct V6
- Cave Crack into Midget V7
- Cave Crack into Cave Right V7
- Cave Traverse into Cave Direct V8
- Cave Traverse, Reverse V11

DISCLAIMER: Rock climbing is INHERENTLY DANGEROUS and should only be performed by persons with proper training. This guide is not meant to be instructional in any way. Using the information in this guide is done so at YOUR OWN RISK. Find the help and instruction of a trained professional if you do not feel completely knowledgeable on the safety procedures of rock climbing.

Introduction

This is intended to be a guide for the extremely esoteric rules and conventions that exist on the Cave Boulder in Interstate State park in Saint Croix Falls, Wisconsin. (coordinates: 45°23'53.8"N 92°38'57.9"W). Hopefully, this will be helpful in understanding the historical context in which this boulder was developed, and make the main lines and link-ups more clear to you. Also, it's just kinda fun to be this insanely detailed and nerdy about something.

You don't have to follow ANY of this information to have fun at The Cave... you can put this guide down and go do whatever you want. HOWEVER, if you want to play the game, the same game that generations of midwest climbers have played before you, then the contents of this guide are the rules to that very game. In the past, the climbing community was so small that these rules were easily passed down through word of mouth and forum comments. Ironically, this tradition is growing increasingly difficult to uphold as information has been available in greater abundance and lesser detail.

A brief history of The Cave Boulder

The Cave boulder, and other boulders like it in the world, hold a cherished and special place in the community. Because of its abundance of features and its relative proximity to the population center,

boulders like this have been historically important to the development of climbers' skill; an outdoor gym. Rocks like this lend themselves to hanging out and making moves up with your buddies; much like a climbing gym or spray wall would enable a session in the modern era. While the burden of these kinds of boulders to train the next generation has lightened somewhat, there is a new task: to help climbers demonstrate the skills they have developed inside.

So, all that is to say, The Cave was a place to play with friends... we can think of this like a game. As with any game, there are rules.

A note on names

The names in this book are the same that the community has used for the majority of the time since this boulder's development, largely sticking with the names assigned by the first ascensionist, or the ones selected by the community for a given problem. If there is no 'proper' name for a problem, a simple description of beginning to end has been provided. I would like to highlight one problem's name: Midget. This problem is in the dead center of the boulder and many problems link into and out of it, as such, this word appears numerous times in this guide. While this is obviously problematic, I have chosen to include the historic name in this guide for now, until such a time that our community has agreed on a replacement. This guide will be updated at that point!

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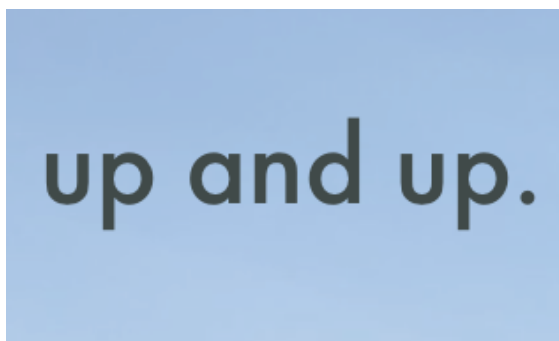
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Rules: Problems, Lines, Sequences, Eliminates.

Problem: a predetermined challenge on a piece of rock, usually a line/sequence that was ‘created’ by the first ascensionist. Subsequent ascents by others are considered ‘repeats’.

Line: a general direction or path followed by the climber between a set of distinguished start holds and a finishing zone or hold.

Sequence: a specific series of holds that must exclusively be used between a set of distinguished start holds and a finishing zone or hold.

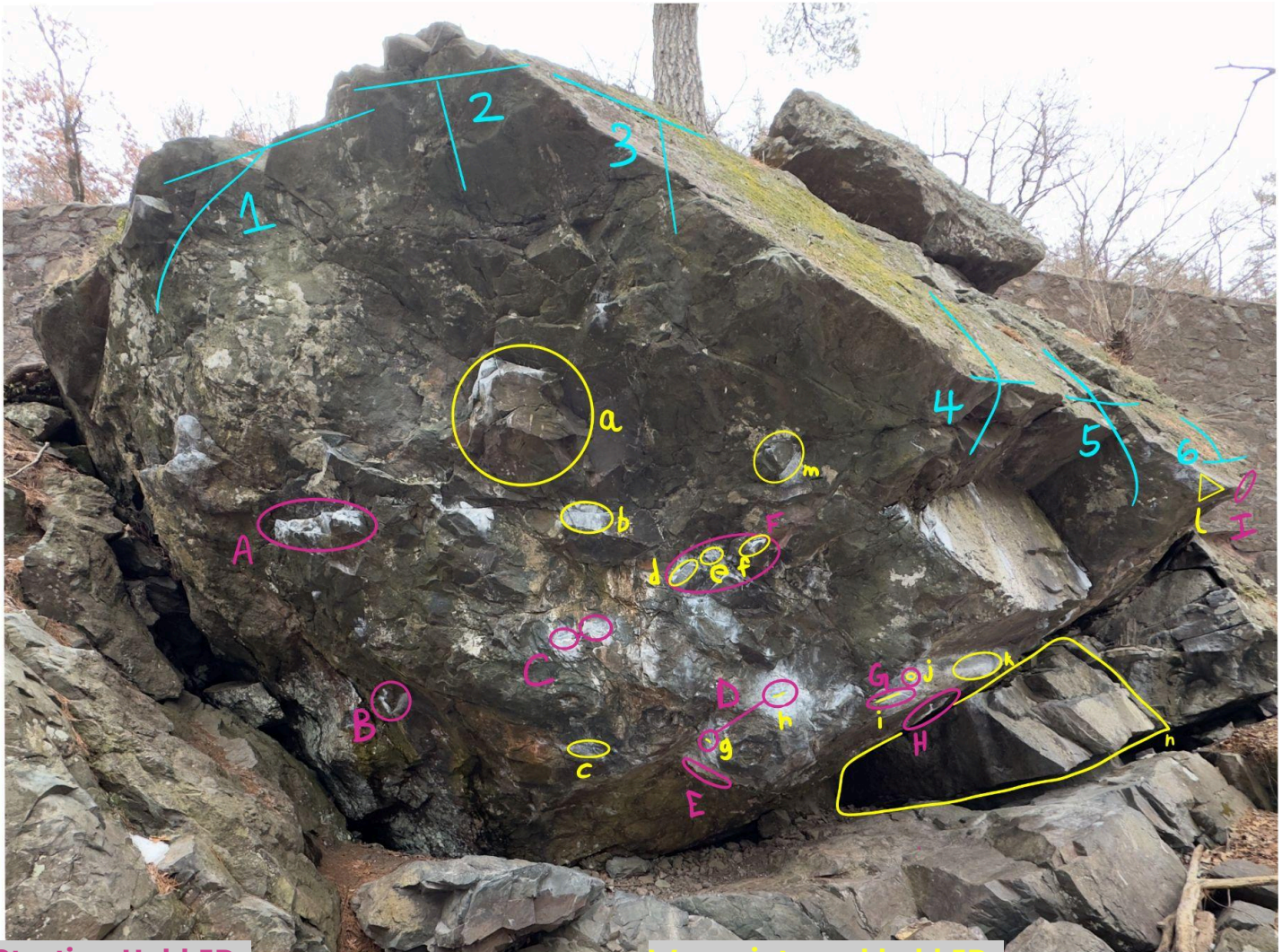
Eliminate: the inverse of the Sequence: the excluded holds or features.

All developed climbing outdoors anywhere has Lines that a First Ascentionist followed. Sometimes these lines have specific sequences, and by extension, eliminates that are excluded. Historically, climbers have done a bad job documenting these rules. The Cave is no exception to this convention. I have made an attempt to codify the rules into a serial number for each of the lines on the boulder. The code is as follows:

“**Start hold ID** **Checkpoint(s) ID** **Top hold ID** **Eliminates ID**”

Examples:

- Cave Left Sit V6: **B 1**
- Liquid Swords V7: **D 5 xm**
- Cave Traverse V8: **H D 1**



Starting Hold IDs

- A. Cave Left
- B. Cave Left Sit
- C. Cave Direct
- D. Midget Sit (g+h)
- E. Midget Low
- F. Midget Stand (pick two: d/e/f)
- G. Cave Right (i+j)
- H. Cave Crack
- I. Cave End

Top IDs

- 1. Cave Left
- 2. Cave Direct
- 3. Midget
- 4. Cave Right
- 5. Cave Crack
- 6. Cave End

Waypoints and hold IDs

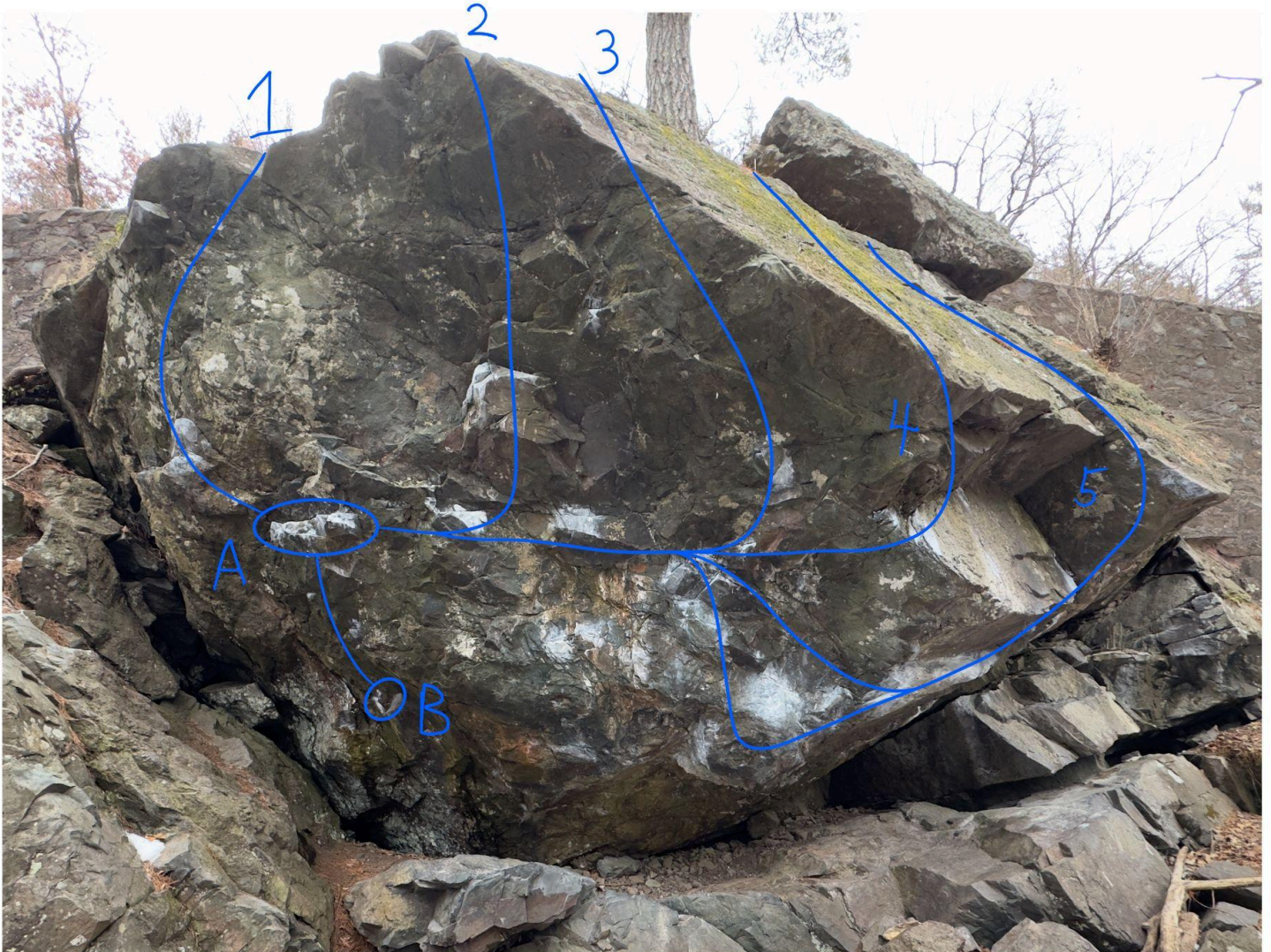
- a. "The Bulge"
- b. Brick crimp
- c. Glass foot
- d. Edge
- e. Tooth
- f. Ear
- g. Sidepull
- h. Glass crimp
- i. Pinch
- j. Pocket
- k. Sloper
- l. "The Beak"
- m. Brick pinch
- n. Block

*x = Eliminate the following letter

Main Lines

- A1. Cave Left V0
- B1. Cave Left Sit V6
- C2. Cave Direct V3
- D3xa. Midget Sit V7
- G4. Cave Right V7
- D5xn. Liquid Swords V7
- HDF1xa. Cave Traverse V8
- HDFxa3. Oxygen Cocktail V9
- H5. Cave Crack V4
- I6. Cave End V1

Problems by Main Line



Cave Left

A1. Cave Left V0

- B1. Cave Left Sit V6
- B2. Cave Left Sit into Cave Direct V6
- B3xa. Cave Left Sit into Midget V9
- B4. Cave Left Sit into Cave Right V8
- B5xn. Cave Left Sit into Cave Crack V9
- BDF5xn. Alt-Left V10



Cave Direct

C2. Cave Direct V3

- C1. Cave Direct Into Cave Left V3
- CF3xa. Cave Direct into Midget V6
- C4. Cave Direct into Cave Right V6



Midget

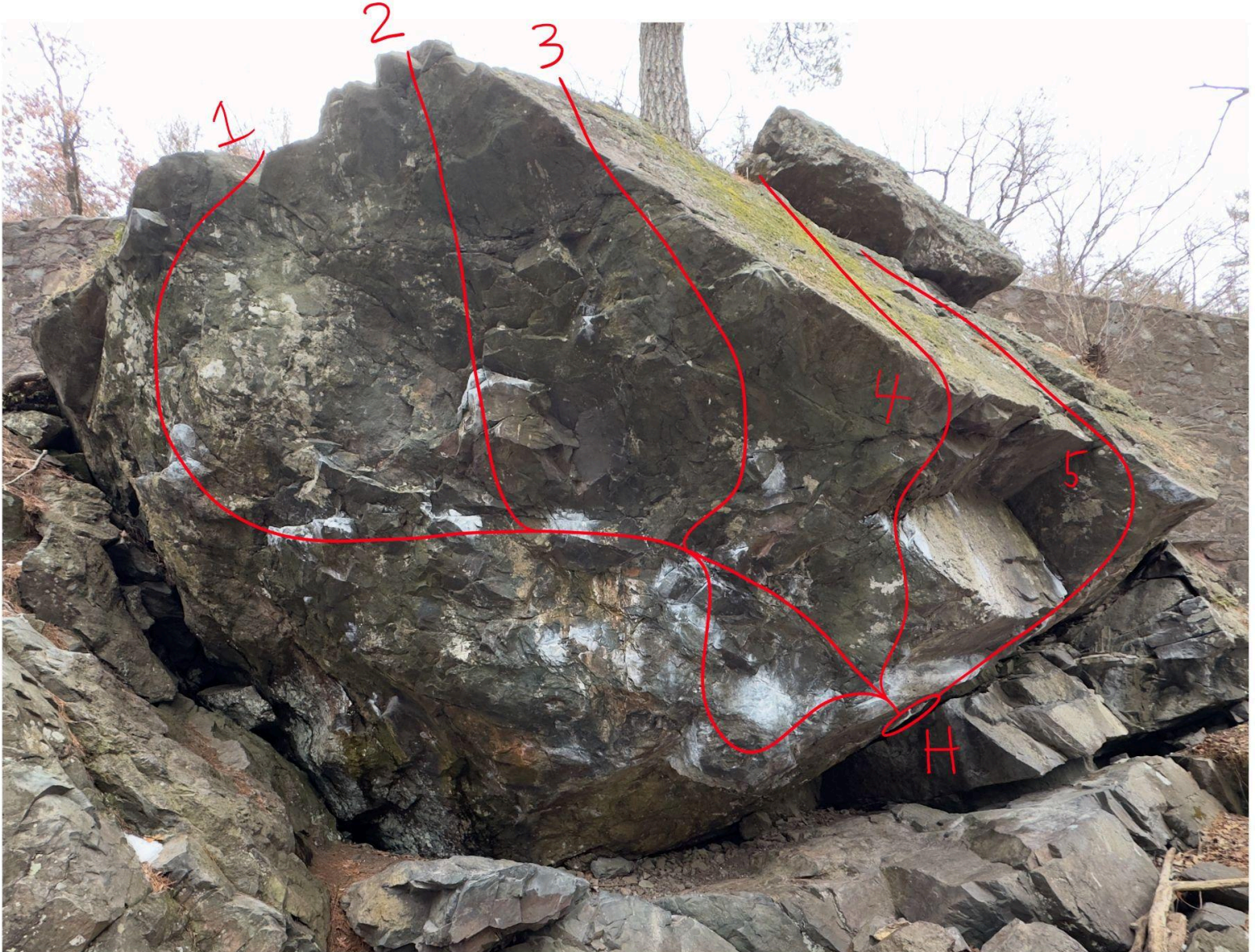
D3xa. Midget Sit V7

- F3xa. Midget Stand V5
- E3xa. Midget Sit Low V9
- DF2. Midget Sit into Cave Direct V6
- EF2. Midget Sit Low into Cave Direct V8
- DF1. Midget Sit into Cave Left V6
- EF1. Midget Sit Low into Cave Left V8
- DF4. Midget Sit into Cave Right (High) V7
- DG4. Midget Sit into Cave Right (Low) V7
- EF4. Midget Sit Low into Cave Right (High) V9
- EG4. Midget Sit Low into Cave Right (Low) V9
- D5xn. Liquid Swords V7
- E5xn. Liquid Swords Low V9



Cave Right

G4. Cave Right V7



Cave Crack

H5. Cave Crack V4

- H1. Cave Crack into Cave Left V6
- H2. Cave Crack into Cave Direct V6
- H3. Cave Crack into Midget V7
- HDF3xa. Oxygen Cocktail V9
- H4. Cave Crack into Cave Right V7
- HDF1xa. Cave Traverse V8
- HDF3. Cave Traverse into Cave Direct V8
- HDFa1AFD5xan. Cave Traverse, Reverse V11



Cave End

I6. Cave End V1

Final Notes:

This guide is meant to be thorough, but not exhaustive: there are even MORE lines, sequences, and contrivances on this boulder, but this catalog of 35 boulders are the primary problems that many many many climbers before you have been climbing for decades. The Cave has been sessioned on for a very long time, and it is extremely unlikely that you, the reader, will create a sequence that has not been thought of or climbed in the past, by someone else. It is safe to assume that there are no remaining first ascents available on this rock. This guide will be updated periodically with updates as holds inevitably break, new classics are adhered to, and the culture of this piece of rock develops. Also, I probably made some errors (formatting or otherwise) that will need to be fixed. Please send all questions/comments/edit suggestions/hold breaks to zach@aclimbing.com.

Enjoy!

Version notes:

4/13/24: Release

4/15/24: Formatting. Cleaned up some inconsistent rules. Added a comma. Added Version Notes section.

4/17/24: Added missing grade.

4/18/24: Formatting. Added YouTube Playlist link.