



EIGER SPEED 3 H. 54 MIN

heckmair-route

December 2004



It's the first time I climbed the Eiger Northface solo and the whole traverse has been filmed and photographed. It took me 10 hours to reach the summit. From this moment I constantly occupied myself with the Heckmair Route. How was it possible to climb this route in 4 hours and 30 minutes?

Christoph Hainz made it. He climbed the 1800 meter high face in this time.

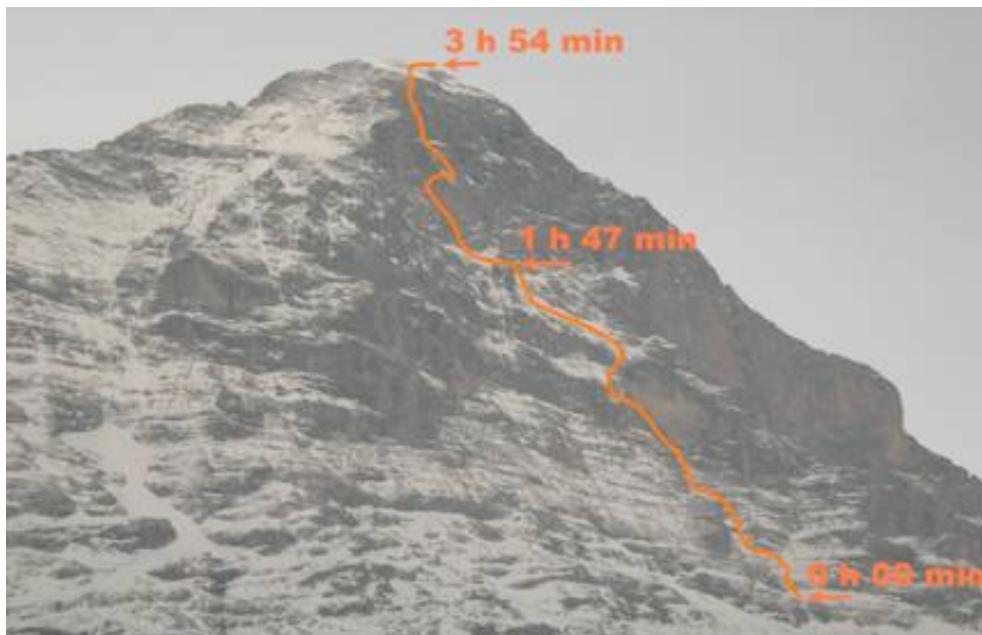
Since 2003 I have been at the Eiger Northface again and again and I have been thinking about the possibility to realise this project. What I needed were simply good and stable weather conditions.

February 17 and 18, 2007

I climbed the Heckmair Route with Nicole, my girlfriend. I promised her a long time ago to climb this classic route. For her it was a great experience. We had a really good time together climbing the route and the weather was beautiful. The first night we spent in the Bivouac of Death in our phantom sleeping bags. I must admit that the name of the bivouac is not very romantic, especially when you are climbing with your girlfriend. However it is the best place where to spend the night and it's

pretty much in the middle of the face. The next day we reached the summit at 3.30 pm.

While we were getting back, I realised that these were exactly the conditions I have been waiting for years. I had this plan in my mind for a very long time and the possibility to go for this new record at the Eiger Northface was suddenly very real. I thought that it could be finally possible to break this record of Christoph Hainz of 4 hours and 30 minutes.



February 21, 2007

I have been training very hard for the last six months for my next project, which will start in March. I will try to climb the Annapurna Southface solo. My goal is it, to finish the route, which Pierre Béghin and Christoph Lafaille from France could never bring to an end in 1992.

After two days of resting – the weather was still beautiful and the temperatures extremely mild – I took the train to the Eigergletscher Station. It's a wonderful ride and at 7.25 am I was at the foot of the Eiger Northface, knowing that I would be back for dinner...

I rested a while close to the memorial tablet of the two death Italian climbers, concentrated myself and pressed the start button of my watch. My heartbeat reached 180 shortly. The first 500 meters were more or less snow at 45 to 60 degrees and some small mixed pitches. 10 minutes later I found a crampon in the

snow. It was a brand new crampon. I knew somebody must have dropped it. So I clipped it into my harness. A couple of minutes later I found two English climbers sleeping. A short look on my watch showed me that I was on my way since 16 minutes. I gave the guys their crampon back and told them that I was on a hurry, because I had to be back in town in the afternoon...They thought I was kidding. Until the Difficult Crack climbing was easy going. The key of the whole ascent was my new belay system. I climbed to the third piton; there I clipped my rope with a leaver beamer to the piton. I had a loop of approximately 15 meters. It was just a back up of for the worst case: I could have fallen 30 meters...

My climbing was going on just perfect. I was very concentrated and I realised that I climbed the two Rock Pitches in 7 minutes. I reached the endurance part until The Ramp. A quick look on my watch: 1 hour and 46 minutes. I reached the bivouac place, where 3 days ago I spent the night with my girlfriend. I drunk some water, ate a power bar and off I was again. In the Ramp I found a second key pitch for me. I continued with the same belay system, it felt as I was doing as every day. I was perfectly prepared for all the eventualities but it took me only a few minutes to finish the Waterfallchimney...I unclipped the rope and climbed again without rope just having a 30 meter tail behind me. The Traverse of Good was just like three days before: walking.

Up the Exit Crack I had to belay again 15 meters. But my worst case belay system was very efficient. Once I reached the summit snowfield and after the Arrete to the Summit I went as fast as I could. I didn't check the watch anymore since I left the Bivouac of Death. I reached the summit and my first reaction was to stop the clock. However, I took me a few moments to be able to check the time. When I finally look down to my watch I could hardly believe it: 3 hours and 54 minutes and a few seconds. I made it. A dream has come true.

After a short rest I reached the Eigerglacier one hour later. The descent back to the train station Eigerglacier was a great sliding on my back nearly the whole way down.

I still had enough time to go to the boulder gym in the late afternoon...

