Friday, May 18, 2012

Gear review of H20 Pro-TechT Jacket

OK, I’ve been wearing this all season, so it’s time for a review. I’ve carried my H20 jacket with me every climbing trip, adding layers underneath depending on conditions. The H20 Pro-TechT waterproof jacket sold by Onward & Upward Outfitters comes with clean styling and multisport versatility. Here’s the specs: nylon blend fabric, athletic fit, windproof, waterproof, breathable laminate (not), helmet-compatible hood, and thigh length for max coverage, laminated zippers, articulated elbows, convenient Napoleon and upper-arm pockets, and waist cord. Sounds great, right? Not so fast.

I made my almost weekly shopping trip to Onward & Upward Outfitters, looking for a minimalist alpine jacket for use while climbing. According to the sales staff at Onward & Upward Outfitters, “This jacket will keep you bone-dry in a hurricane.” I get they are trying to sound enthusiastic and sell me the product, but they just don’t know what they’re talking about. The staff is a bunch of young college kids in sandals who have never actually been climbing or been caught in a lengthy rainstorm on the side of a mountain. Contrary to the sales pitch, the fabric is NOT breathable. Unless you plan to wear it just while you sit around camp, the jacket is just not suitable. I ended up a clammy mess on most of my climbs. With a layer underneath, I can avoid most of the moisture issues. This seems like a cheap fix for an expensive but flawed product.

Other concerns: That upper-arm pocket: worthless and a pain to open and close. The hood is not helmet-adjustable. The main zipper is not waterproof. The lining is starting to delaminate. So, all in all, a big thumbs down for the H20 Pro-TechT jacket and the guy who sold it to me.

I expect more from a jacket in this price range and question whether Onward & Upward should even be selling this product.