

Pyfferoen and Zipsie responded from the North Shore with the rescue truck to the Devil's Doorway Area. An ambulance was notified about 1430 and arrived at Steinke Basin about 1450. We arrived at the scene about 1440. The victim, Greg Stroupe (29), was conscious, in good spirits and had been sitting up. He complained of pain in the left knee, left wrist, tail bone and jaw areas, and had been unconscious for about four minutes. With the assistance of nearby climbers, the victim was placed onto a litter and pulled up the bluff about 12 meters, and from there carried to the rescue truck. About 1510 the victim was transferred to the Baraloo Ambulance at Steinke Basin. (Source: Officer John Burnesch, Devil's Lake State Park)

Analysis

The victim stated he was leading a climb up a rock face known as Jolly Roger and he put in "a bad hex" and it popped out, causing him to fall about ten meters to a rock ledge below. He stated he had made this climb before. He also had been drinking wine before the fall. There was no sign of any climbing gear or ropes when the officers arrived. (Source: Officer John Burnesch, Devil's Lake State Park)

PROTECTION PULLED OUT, FALL ON ROCK

Wisconsin, Devil's Lake State Park

On August 3, 1983, John Gorton (23) was climbing the rock face just below the balanced rock. He stated that he was using a Friend which he thought was in tight. He had been hanging on it for five minutes when it came out, resulting in his falling 20 meters. Paul Gorton was belaying below the victim and stated that the victim just fell. Both individuals were using headphones to communicate with one another, harnesses, ropes, and climbing shoes. A person was watching from above when the accident occurred and stated that Gorton just fell, stating, "Shit."

Gorton had fractured his left wrist and experienced pain in his lower left back. He was evacuated by park personnel. (Source: Officer John Burnesch, Devil's Lake State Park)

(Editor's Note: Of the seven accidents in Devil's Lake State Park this year, five of them involved falls where protection pulled out or was not placed at all. Park personnel believe that they still have many inexperienced climbers here, as the area is still in the process of being "discovered.")

FALL ON SNOW, CLIMBING ALONE

Wyoming, Tetons

On May 31, 1983, Robert Eastham (28), a moderately experienced mountaineer, signed out to climb the Skillet Glacier route on Mount Moran on June 1, returning on June 2. Because of the danger of spring avalanches, I advised Eastham to turn back if conditions seemed hazardous and to be off the mountain by 1100. He agreed with these guidelines.

Eastham successfully cramponed up the Skillet Glacier on June 1, reaching the summit at 1035. Because the snow was softening, he began his descent soon afterwards without crampons. While downclimbing the southern arm of the "V" at the

top of the “handle” of the Skillet, he lost his footing in a very soft section of snow and began sliding. He assumed a self-arrest position with his ice ax, but was unable to stop himself in the soft snow. When he slid into harder snow, feet first, he fractured his left ankle, but was able to self-arrest.

After the fall, he climbed across to a rock ledge on the edge of the handle around the 3700-meter elevation. He hung his cagoule on the rocks as a distress signal and bivouacked in his sleeping bag. Over the course of the next three nights, he used the flash of his camera to signal for help. The weather, which had been mostly sunny preceding the accident, now deteriorated to increasingly frequent rain and snow showers.

On June 3, when Eastham became overdue, the Jenny Lake climbing rangers glassed the east slopes of Mount Moran with a telescope in an attempt to locate Eastham, but because of the storm clouds, were unable to see him. Likewise, we were unable to observe his camera flashes at night.

On June 4, Rangers Burgette, Dorward, Johnson, Speckman, and Woodmency began searching the east side of Mount Moran on foot. At 1335, as they were ascending the Skillet Glacier, they met Eastham, who by then had managed to descend to the base of the handle. They lowered Eastham to a heliport which they had shoveled out of the snow at the base of the Skillet. He was flown by helicopter from there to Lupine Meadows at 1715. (Source: Craig Patterson, Ranger, Grand Teton National Park)

Analysis

Spring thaw in the Tetons results in the kind of soft snow condition not recommended for climbing—especially steep routes. With a partner, the section on which Eastham fell might have been belayed. At least the partner could have gone for help. (Source: Craig Patterson, Ranger, Grand Teton National Park)

FALL ON ROCK, FALLING ROCK

Wyoming, Tetons

On July 4, Greg Smith and Melissa Malm (28) were climbing a route on Prospectors' Mountain (3370 meters) named the “Upper Northeast Face” (II, F6).

Around 1430 at the 3150-meter level, Smith led a traversing pitch, and Malm was following. She fell and pendulumed into a sharp rock, breaking her right femur. A rock flake, around which Smith had placed a sling for protection, pulled loose and struck Malm on the top of her hard hat. Her hard hat fractured, causing a small laceration on her scalp.

Smith maneuvered Malm to a ledge, where he anchored her, attempted to splint her leg with a stick, and made her as comfortable as possible with extra clothing. He then downclimbed the route and went for help. At 1625 he reached a pay phone at Whitegrass Ranch and called the Jenny Lake Ranger Station. I mobilized the Jenny Lake rescue team and ordered our contract helicopter from Big Piney, Wyoming. The helicopter arrived at 1755, and by 1900 had airlifted four climbing rangers to the summit. During the next two hours, four more climbing rangers were airlifted to the top, and made their way through steep, loose, technical rock terrain to Malm's position.