

routes on this peak in ways that do not alert the potential climber to the consistent hazards of changing weather and patches of snow that are, at times, hard packed or situated where one might not expect to encounter them, especially late in the summer. This can be a deceiving area, particularly for the uninitiated. (Source: J. Williamson)

FALL ON ICE, INADEQUATE PROTECTION

Colorado, Thatchtop Mountain

On November 13, 1982, Paul Braun (24) and Doug Walker were ice climbing on the east side of Thatchtop Mountain, above Mills Lake. They had finished one pitch of steep ice with no problems. Braun, who was leading the second pitch, had worked his way up a steep section, over a difficult rock headwall and back onto steep ice. By this time, Braun was about 25 meters above Walker and about 15 meters above his last protection—a Friend. He stopped on ice to contemplate placing another anchor and his feet shot out from under him. He fell back down the ice, became airborne over the headwall and slammed back into the ice before Walker could arrest the fall. The Friend anchor held. Braun's legs and arms felt fine but his back hurt and his muscles were quickly becoming stiff and sore. He was able to downclimb and walk out under his own power with some assistance from Walker. (Source: Charlie Logan, Rocky Mountain National Park)

Analysis

Although Braun was wearing Lowe Footfangs, he does not place any blame on this equipment. He had an ice hammer hanging from his right wrist but it was not placed. He had an ice ax in his left hand with only slight placement. Braun thinks the cause of the accident was human error. The angle of the ice had eased off and Braun had let his concentration on his footing ease off as well. (Source: Charlie Logan, Rocky Mountain National Park)

BAD WEATHER, EXHAUSTION, OFF ROUTE, CLIMBING ALONE, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT

Colorado, Thatchtop Mountain

On December 16, 1982, Michael Dorsey (24) left the trail head for a solo ice climb in the Thatchtop-Powell area. The weather conditions were marginal but Dorsey decided they were not bad enough to turn back. He successfully climbed a 260-meter, high-angle snow field and topped out on the Continental Divide in extremely poor conditions (80 kph winds, blowing snow, freezing temperatures and very poor visibility). Battered by high winds and with his eyelids freezing shut, Dorsey attempted to descend Thatchtop Mountain until he ran into very difficult terrain. During the attempt, he twisted and injured his knee. He than decided to turn back and find an easier descent route. Without realizing it, he began descending the opposite side of the Divide, toward Grand Lake. He dropped down into the North Inlet drainage, thinking he was in the Loch drainage, and kept moving all night. In the meantime, he broke though a snow bridge over a stream and soaked his

boots and legs. Eventually, he realized that something was wrong with the landmarks and decided to climb up to a ridge top to get oriented again.

Dorsey gained the ridge, located himself, and decided it would be wiser to go back down and head in the direction of Grand Lake. Before leaving, he dug in for the night and spent much of his time massaging his legs and feet.

On December 18, Dorsey headed down. Due to his injured knee, deep snow and sapped energy, the going was very slow and he ended up digging in for his third night without food, fire or liquids. On December 19, he continued out, finally reaching the trailhead about 1600. Here he was helped at a private residence and was able to call the Park personnel who, by that time, had called in 70 rescuers and had spent 818 hours on the project. (Source: Charlie Logan, Rocky Mountain National Park)

Analysis

Although Dorsey made some serious mistakes from the very beginning, he managed to keep and use his wits to save his life—and limbs. He claims that matches, compass and other basic essentials will not be overlooked again. (Source: Charlie Logan, Rocky Mountain National Park)

(Editor's Note: There were undoubtedly other accidents elsewhere in Colorado last year. We are trying to get more comprehensive data from these areas and would welcome help, ideas and contacts.)

It is worth noting that I received some reports of hiking accidents in Rocky Mountain National Park which resulted in one death and one serious injury. The fatality was a 12-year-old boy who, after seeing a mountaineering slide show, became "almost obsessed with the desire to climb a mountain and slide a snow field," according to his parents. He became separated from his family on a hike to Flattop Mountain; his body was found two weeks later at the bottom of a couloir west of Emerald Lake.

The serious injury involved a 19-year-old female who was with four friends when they decided to slide down a snow field on Fall Mountain. She lost control and broke her leg when she slid into the rocks.

Helping hikers understand the speed with which a walk or a "fun" slide can turn into a mountaineering situation requiring another level of skill remains a challenge.)

FROSTBITE, HYPOTHERMIA, BAD WEATHER, EXPOSURE, LOST, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT

New Hampshire, Mount Washington

On January 22, 1982, Jeffrey Batzer (20) and Hugh Herr (17) arrived at Pinkham Notch; immediately after checking in, they started up the steep, three-mile trail to Harvard Cabin, a two-room structure of logs chinked with oakum just below Huntington Ravine. Batzer, an apprentice in tool-and-die making, and Herr, a high school junior, were ardent ice climbers.

The young men practiced constantly on the frozen falls around Lancaster (Pennsylvania) and Batzer, a wiry 123 pounds, worked out every day with weights. They had been to Mount Washington before. This time they came to climb Odell's Gully in Huntington Ravine.