

## **FALLS ON ROCK, BELAYER DROPPED LEADER, RAPPELLED OFF END OF ROPE, FOOT AND LEG STUCK BETWEEN ROCKS**

### **West Virginia, New River Gorge and Cooper's Rock**

There were reports of eight climbing accidents resulting in injury from the above areas in 1993. The brief descriptions include the following.

An individual decided to leave his equipment and free climb in a no climbing area. The wind blew him off and he fell 25 feet, landing on a tree root sticking out from the cliff. This saved him from what could have been a longer, perhaps fatal, fall. A lead climber was being lowered by his belayer. He ran out of rope and dropped the leader 15 or 20 feet. A shattered ankle required a helicopter evacuation. There was a report of an individual rappelling off the end of his rope (see comment under Pennsylvania section), resulting in no major injuries other than shock. An inexperienced climber (13) tried to down climb a route with no rope, and he fell about 30 feet, resulting in paralysis due to spinal injury. Two individuals got their foot and leg stuck between rocks, one resulting in torn ligaments, the other in a fracture.

As climbing becomes more popular in this area, the reporting system will be more thorough. (Source: Jim Yester)

## **ROCK BROKE LOOSE, FALL ON ROCK, ICE TOOLS AND PITONS PULLED OUT**

### **Wyoming, Grand Teton National Park, Grand Teton**

On March 11, 1993, around 1000, ranger Renny Jackson received a report of a climbing accident on the Grand Teton. According to the reporting party, MV, his partner, PR, had fallen 100 feet while attempting a route on the north face. The fall occurred near the top of the route, at 1700 on March 10. MV was able to assist PR down the north face and back to their base camp on Teton Glacier, arriving at 2200. PR was stabilized in their tent, and MV skied out to the Taggart Lake Trailhead to report the accident the following morning. PR's injuries were described as a possible fracture to the forearm and ribs, and possible head injury. Following a temporary loss of consciousness which occurred immediately after the fall, a small amount of blood was observed in PR's sputum.

Following additional on-scene patient stabilization, PR was secured in the helicopter and flown to St. John's Hospital in Jackson, arriving at 1235. Follow-up medical examination by emergency room staff found no fractures or significant injury, but extensive, multiple body contusions. PR was held overnight for observation.

### **Analysis**

Ranger Mark Magnuson interviewed MV regarding the cause of the accident. MV and PR were attempting a mixed rock and ice route which ascends the east portion of the north face, approximately seven to eight pitches (800 feet) in length. After climbing a multi-pitch ice runnel, PR was leading a final section, preparing to turn the east ridge. PR was standing on ice covered rock with both ice tools placed in thin ice. He later explained to MV that the rock broke loose beneath his feet and both tools pulled. PR fell approximately ten to 20 feet, pulled a long snarg placed completely to the eye, fell an additional 30 feet pulling two pitons, before he was caught by the belay. The last remaining piece of protection above the belay anchors, a tied-off snarg, caught the fall. MV estimated the total falling distance at 100 feet.

Following a temporary loss of consciousness, PR was able to secure himself to the

ice/rock face. MV descended to PR's position and assisted him in rappelling seven pitches to the base of the route. Another half mile descent took them back to their base camp.

PR was described as a very fit and experienced mountaineer who was climbing well within his ability. MV stated that, perhaps, fatigue had been a contributing factor in the fall, as evidenced by PR's actions and pace prior to the event. Both climbers were wearing helmets which, in the case of PR, probably saved his life. Following a leader fall of 100 feet, given the existing circumstances, conditions, and position on the north face, it is noteworthy that PR and MV were able to effect a self-rescue back to their base camp. (Source: Mark Magnuson, SAR Ranger, Grand Teton National Park)

### **FALL ON ROCK, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT, OFF-ROUTE, UNROPED Wyoming, Grand Teton National Park, Mount Moran**

Beset by bad weather and injury, a climber wearing shorts, running tights and a light jacket spent two nights on Mount Moran without overnight gear before rangers found him early May 30.

BJ (48) was found resting in a gully on Mount Moran's south face. He was cradling a broken arm when rescuers were able to haul him out by helicopter about 0815, said Mark Magnuson, Jenny Lake subdistrict ranger. He was transported to St. John's Hospital, where he was treated and released.

The climbers had left their Jackson Lake campsite Friday morning, planning to climb the Skillet Glacier route up Moran and return by the same route that night, Magnuson said. The pair reached the top too late to begin their descent Friday.

Carrying only a small supply of food and water, they spent the night at the summit without a tent or sleeping bags. Temperatures dipped below freezing.

Saturday morning they began to descend the rocky south face, not wanting to return by the steep, icy route they had climbed. BJ slipped on loose rock and fell 20 feet, slicing open his hip and suffering a hairline fracture near his elbow.

DJ continued down to get help and completed his ten-hour descent about 2045 Saturday, and told rangers how to find his partner. Another helicopter search ensued, but the search was aborted when it became too dark to see.

"We were pretty worried by that time," Magnuson said. "It was his second night out, and it was raining." Sunday morning a helicopter dropped off two rangers, who hiked to BJ and stabilized his injuries. He was extracted by helicopter. (Source: From an article by Craig Welch, *Jackson Hole News*, June 2, 1993)

### **AVALANCHE**

#### **Wyoming, Grand Teton National Park, Mount Moran**

On July 28, 1993, PM (male—42), MG (female—37), and JG (male—38) attempted to climb the Skillet Glacier route on Mount Moran.

About 1245, they were about 200 feet below the top of the snow tongue which extends toward the summit from the "Handle" of the Skillet. A soft snow, point release avalanche broke loose a short distance above and swept all three climbers (roped together at 75 foot intervals) down the handle over the rock island and onto the "pan" of the glacier, a distance of about 2,000 vertical feet. During the fall they made repeated attempts to self-arrest but were unsuccessful because of the mass of soft snow which was carrying them down the mountain.