

FALLS ON ROCK (4), CLIMBING UNROPED (3), FALLING ROCK—NO HELMET

Wisconsin, Devil's Lake State Park

There were five reports of climbing accidents from Devil's Lake this year, three of which resulted in fractures. The falling rock incident resulted in a concussion, as the victim was not wearing a helmet.

The average age of the victims was 22. Their skill levels and the difficulty of the routes were not included in the reports. There were an additional eleven "scrambling" incidents. These involve people getting off trail and slipping among loose rocks and boulders. All but one of the injuries in these cases were lacerations because of the nature of the rock. (Source: Steven Schmelzer, Park Ranger)

FALL ON SNOW—UNABLE TO SELF-ARREST, INEXPERIENCE, NO BELAY

Wyoming, Grand Teton National Park, Mount Teewinot

Chris Thompson (16) and Forrest Hill (?) had left Idaho Falls early the morning of June 6 to climb the East Face of Mount Teewinot. Thompson, being more experienced, was described as the leader, intent on providing instruction to Hill who had never before climbed on steep snow. Thompson was equipped with plastic boots, crampons, and a short Grivel ice tool. Hill was equipped with light Nike hiking shoes, crampons and a short Grivel ice tool borrowed from Thompson. Near 11,500 feet, Thompson and Hill put their crampons on. Within five minutes, the soft snow balled up under Thompson's crampons, causing him to slip. Thompson was unable to arrest his fall using his ice tool and slid down the snow slope picking up speed. Thompson estimates that he fell several hundred feet before falling into a "moat" (which he described as a horizontal crack in the snow separated by rock on the uphill side and snow on the downhill side). Thompson said that it took him over an hour to extricate himself, which likely explains why his partner was unable to locate him after the fall. Thompson then began his slow descent from the mountain.

Analysis

Based on information obtained in the interview, it seemed apparent that Hill was a beginning climber with essentially no experience, and Thompson was a novice climber with limited experience. Thompson was fortunate that he sustained only minor injuries. Without his early plunge into the opening, it is likely that Thompson's slide would have taken him over 1,000 feet down continuous steep snow and over multiple bands of steep rock. The arrival of Robert Keene, the mountaineer who assisted Hill to a safe location near tree line, initiated a search for Thompson, and then reported the incident to rangers, was a fortunate event which contributed to the overall positive outcome of this incident. (Source: Mark Magnuson, SAR Coordinator)

FALL ON ROCK—CAUSE UNKNOWN, CLIMBING ALONE

Wyoming, Grand Teton National Park, Grand Teton, Owen-Spaulding Route

On June 23 at 0825, Amer Beslagic (38) obtained a back-country camping permit at the Jenny Lake Ranger Station for a campsite at the Moraine in Garnet. His intention was to solo climb the Grand Teton via the Owen-Spaulding Route on the following day. From a