

Analysis

The Yamnuska crag has been described by some as a “hopeless pile of garbage rock.” There is plenty of good rock to be found on the crag, but it is important to test holds before committing to them.

FALL ON ROCK, NUT/CHOCK PULLED OUT

Alberta, Banff National Park, Tunnel Mountain, The Shoe

On July 6, R. B. was part of an “Advanced Mountain Operations Course” being run by the Canadian Military out of CPC Trenton. The group consisted of 14 students and seven instructors. R. B. was part of a group that was learning to lead climb. He had done some top-roped leading practice and a “couple of other easy climbs on lead.” He was on the first pitch of “The Shoe” (I, 5.6) on Tunnel Mountain and had placed one tricam about five metres up from the belay. As he neared the traverse left into the crack, he slipped and fell. His gear pulled and he landed on his head on the belay ledge. He then tumbled down below the belay. His instructor called 911 on his cell phone and then began to lower the victim.

The patient was located by rescue on the scree below the climb, still tied in to the rope. He had suffered a severe blow to the head and was displaying wild aggression and thrashing around. There was no response to verbal or pain stimulus only incoherent verbiage and yelling. EMS administered IV and drugs and the patient was heli-slung directly from the scene to the hospital and shortly afterwards transferred to Calgary via STARS air ambulance.

Analysis

The leader was wearing a helmet which was crushed and broken. Dispatchers for 911 in the Banff / Lake Louise area are based in Calgary. Climbers in the National Parks should be aware of the lack of knowledge of the terrain that the 911 dispatchers have and be very clear of their location and the requirement for a mountain rescue response when reporting an incident. (Source: Bradford White, Banff National Park Warden Service)

FALL ON ROCK, INADEQUATE BELAY, INEXPERIENCE

Alberta, Banff National Park, Grotto Canyon, Paintings Wall

On July 18, a climber who fell roughly 30 feet off a wall near the pictographs at Grotto Canyon was rescued. J.G. (51) was leading a 5.9 climb at Grotto Canyon when he slipped and fell 30 feet. He hit a large boulder, bounced off it, then hit the ground, sustaining multiple injuries. A nurse who was nearby did initial first aid, then she ran to the road to call 911 on her cell phone, as there is no coverage in the canyon.

The man had head injuries and had been unconscious for at least one hour by the time that rescuers arrived. He also had irregular shallow breathing, accompanied by gurgling noises, so he was given oxygen. A tricky maneuver