

Analysis

According to Seibert, "The trauma sustained by Link (cervical fracture) indicated that the fall probably did not originate from the top of the Continental Divide. It is the opinion of Rangers Bredar and Seibert that Link was in the process of descending from the Cleaver area along the Divide when the fall occurred. It is likely that Link reached the Cleaver, decided not to attempt to ascend that feature alone, then began to descend into the Box and Eagle Lakes drainage. The descent route appears rather gradual from the top but becomes very steep toward the bottom. Link was found at the bottom."

While not a climbing accident, this report is presented because it is the first time such circumstances have become known to this editor. Many athletes, especially skiers and long-distance runners, train on mountain trails. Wearing light running clothing and footwear, they travel miles from the road into areas where a hiker would not ordinarily venture without spare clothing and food. There have been incidents of sprained ankles and twisted knees but no fatalities. Perhaps having a companion would not have made any difference in this case, but it is worth considering. As with any of us who have done this kind of training frequently, especially if we go alone, we tend not to think about telling a friend, "Here's my route and if I'm not back by . . ." (Source: J. Williamson)

FALL ON ROCK, NO HARD HAT

Colorado, Longs Peak, The Diamond

While leading the second pitch of the so-called "Casual" route on The Diamond face of the east face of Longs Peak, Milton Strickler (30) fell from a point approximately 30 feet above and 30 feet to the left of his belayer, George Bracksieck (30). According to Bracksieck, Strickler sustained painful head and back injuries causing him to lose consciousness for a short period of time immediately following the fall. Bracksieck lowered his injured partner 155 feet to the large ledge known as Broadway, then rappelled down to him. After making Strickler comfortable, Bracksieck descended the North Chimney route and ran to the Longs Peak Ranger Station to report the accident. Ranger Chris Reveley, who was on Peak Patrol that day, made it to Strickler's location in 30 minutes at 11:06 a.m. and radioed that a litter evacuation from Broadway Ledge was required. Ranger personnel were airlifted to the base of the east face, then ascended the North Chimney and commenced with the 600–700-foot cliff evacuation. The evacuation was completed and the patient loaded aboard a helicopter just at dark and flown to a hospital where he was diagnosed as having a fracture of a thoracic vertebra. (Source: Chris Reveley and Larry Van Slyke, Rocky Mountain National Park)

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The "Casual" route on The Diamond should maybe be renamed the "Casualty" route due to the number of climbers who have taken leader falls on it and sustained injuries. Because of the extent of traversing leads with little protection, long pendulum falls result when a climber becomes detached from the rock. The route is casual in name only. (Source: Larry Van Slyke, Rocky Mountain National Park)

FALL ON ROCK, FALLING ROCK, OFF ROUTE

Colorado, Mt. Sneffels, North Face

Art Porter and Brent Dubach, both experienced climbers with several years of technical