LOSS OF CONTROL–VOLUNTARY GLISSADE, FAULTY USE OF CRAMPONS, FATIGUE, INEXPERIENCE

Washington, Mount Rainier

On August 28, 1982, around noon, Brian Goldstein (27), Gordon Watters, James McCall and Robert Taylor left Paradise for Camp Muir, arriving at 1530 hours. The next morning at 0200 hours, the party left for the summit. At about 4600 meters, they decided to turn around due to fatigue. Just below the level of the top of the Cleaver, Goldstein decided to glissade from about 3850 meters. As not all of his party wanted to slide down, Goldstein unroped and began glissading. He said he picked up so much speed that he became frightened and attempted to stop by jabbing his crampons into the hard snow. He apparently was not that familiar with self-arrest techniques, although he claimed to have practiced them just a month before. He said he jabbed his crampons into the snow which caused both of his ankles to be flexed outward at extreme angles, especially his right ankle, possibly fracturing it. He was unable to move. RMI Guide Edwards and Ranger Philips quickly headed up from Camp Muir. Goldstein's condition was quickly evaluated and, with the help also of RMI Guide Target and a strong client named Peter, he was slid, carried and littered down from the northeast side of Disappointment Cleaver (3750 meters). They arrived at Camp Muir about 2130 hours.

The next day, Goldstein was banana-boated down from Camp Muir with the help of several independent climbers. The group met an NPS team at Pebble Creek and continued down to Paradise, arriving at 1330 hours. (Source: Bundy Philips, Ranger, Mount Rainier National Park)

Analysis

The narrative is self-explanatory. It is worth commenting that the frequency of accidents involving crampons as a means of attempting to self-arrest while glissading is diminishing; this is an encouraging sign. (Source: J. Williamson)

FALL ON ROCK, FALLING ROCK

Wisconsin, Devil's Lake State Park

On June 12, 1982, Darrel Whynot (33) fell two to three meters onto his back when a rock he stepped on disappeared. He was reaching for a belay rope which had been dropped from above. His fall was broken by his pack and no serious injury resulted. (Source: C. T. Sanner, Ranger, Devil's Lake State Park)

Analysis

This climbing area has some similarities to the Shawangunks, especially in terms of accessibility. It is at the same stage of development as the "Gunks" were in a decade ago. The area is becoming more popular both for hiking and climbing. A letter to the U. S. editor from James Buchholz, one of the park's supervisors, reveals the current state of affairs:

> Falls from the bluffs continue to be a major concern for us and we continue to search for answers to the growing problems associated with the sport. In the past year, several private rock-climbing classes have been established using the park as their classroom. A benefit from this type of training is better skilled

climbers with the knowledge of safety techniques. Unfortunately, we have found that as each class completes the course, the number of climbers on the bluff increases proportionately, since there are few other places in the midwest to climb.

Ironically, the climbing classes have swollen the ranks of climbers to the point of pushing former climbers to the more isolated areas of the bluffs and unfortunately less accessible for rescue purposes. More climbers will undoubtedly lead to more falls just by the sheer number of people on the rocks.

A related problem of more climbers is the hiker/climber conflict. Ropes secured to trees and rocks on top of the bluff areas are sometimes stretched across hiking trails. Backpacks, ropes, gear and climbers themselves are often laid out on trails making passage difficult for hikers. Climbers often climb directly over hiking trails creating a dangerous situation.

Some unique geologic rock formations such as the balanced rock and Devil's Doorway here at Devil's Lake may already be overused and abused by rock climbers. Other park visitors' desires to view and photograph these and other natural rock formations without the "spaghetti effect" of ropes, anchors and people all over them must be taken into account.

As the sport grows among clubs, universities and private classes, and as our visitor days number 1¼ million per year, it is apparent that some sort of control will be necessary in the near future. We are confident there can be a place for climbers and hikers alike.

(Source: J. Williamson and James Buchholz)

FALL ON SNOW, FALL INTO MOAT, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT, INEXPERIENCE

Wyoming, Tetons

On June 18, 1982, 24 members of a geology field trip from Western Illinois University hiked to the base of Hidden Falls on the west side of Jenny Lake. Upon arriving at the falls, six members of the group, Rich Schaffer (22), Mark Mitchell (23), Henry Morris (23), Brian O'Neil (23) and two others decided to climb up Symmetry Couloir "to see how high they could get." The group leader, John Mohr, advised the six against making the trip but they decided to go anyway.

Around 1400, the four named hikers reached the col between Ice Point and Symmetry Spire at the top of the couloir. On the ascent they had picked up sticks to use as alpenstocks, since the slope was steep (35–40 degrees) and their slick-soled boots were providing little traction.

After a brief stop at the col, the four started down, electing to slide since they were behind schedule and hadn't noticed any particular hazards during the ascent. After a few "check slides" to make sure they could stop, they started down with Mitchell leading and Schaffer second, followed by Morris and O'Neil.

The slope began to steepen and soon the group was in only marginal control. Their descent route was also slightly to the north of their ascent route and they were channelled into a narrow snow chute that ended in an 18-meter waterfall and moat. Mitchell saw the moat and was able to grab some bushes and stop himself but was unable to hold onto Schaffer who slid over the falls and into the moat. Mitchell yelled to Morris and, at the last moment, he was able to vault the moat