

Analysis

Jakush would not back off despite his earlier performance (a fall and a poorly placed protection piece) and the deteriorating weather. Also, he was not wearing a climbing helmet. The serious head injuries he suffered might have been fatal had it not been for Estes Park Ambulance Paramedics Gerry Hickson and Jeff Schanhals who had hiked to the scene and administered medications to control the swelling in the brain. (Source: Rocky Mountain National Park Rangers)

STRANDED, WEATHER, ROUTE FINDING PROBLEM

Colorado, Rocky Mountain National Park, Longs Peak

On September 15, Jim Mauch (33) and Cathy Casey (34) set out to climb Kiener's Route on Longs Peak. Climbing conditions were somewhat icy and the party was slowed down. They spent the evening of September 16 without their bivouac equipment at the base of a 5.6 dihedral about 150 vertical meters below the summit of Longs Peak. A winter-type storm ensued over the next two days and they were unable to climb out. Rangers Jim Phillips and Ken Unitt climbed Kiener's Route on September 18 during a massive search effort. They assisted Mauch and Casey to the summit, where they were flown away in an Army Chinook helicopter with the climbing search teams. (Source: Rocky Mountain National Park Rangers)

Analysis

Mauch was an experienced mountaineer who led rock to 5.8. Longs Peak would be his 54th and final Colorado fourteen thousander to achieve. Casey was relatively a beginner. They became stranded due to the poor weather and poor route finding. There is a 4th class exit to the right of the 5.6 dihedral which is the standard finish for Kiener's Route. To the credit of their survival skills, they certainly did survive two nights out in nasty weather with minimal equipment. It should be mentioned that winter-type storms commonly begin in September at Rocky Mountain National Park, and aspirant climbers should be equipped and experienced to deal with such.

Because this was Mauch's 54th fourteen thousander, there was some over-zealousness involved. The climbers had even packed a bottle of champagne for the summit celebration. (Source: Rocky Mountain National Park Rangers)

STRANDED, DARKNESS, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT, FAILURE TO LEARN DESCENT ROUTE

Colorado, Rocky Mountain National Park, Taylor Peak

On December 12, Markin Fevughack (25) and Holley English (25) became stranded atop Thatchtop Mountain due to darkness after an ascent of Taylor Glacier on Taylor Peak. It took them most of the following day to work their way down Thatchtop and back to the trailhead. Rescue efforts, including the use of helicopter and numerous ground teams, were then terminated. (Source: Rocky Mountain National Park Rangers)

Analysis

Fevughack and English, although accomplished rockclimbers, had less than a year of snow/ice climbing each. This caused them to have an extremely slow ascent of Taylor