

stopped to rest. His feet slid out from underneath him. In grabbing for his ice ax and attempting to self-arrest, a previously dislocated shoulder popped out. George was unable to regain control of his ice ax and started an uncontrolled slide down the couloir. He struck the rock wall edge of the couloir at least once, fell approximately 500 feet down the snow, struck the rocks at the toe of the snow and catapulted approximately 20 to 30 feet further.

Fortner and others in the area assisted George down to the lake. Fortner then ran down to report the accident, arriving at the Jenny Lake Ranger Station at 1555. A helicopter was immediately requested, which arrived at Lupine at 1625. Numerous ranger personnel were flown in to the lake. George was packaged for transport and carried around the lake to the helispot. He was subsequently airlifted to St. John's Hospital. (Source: Peter Armington, Ranger, Grand Teton National Park)

Analysis

This gully has been the site of several previous accidents. A rope is not usually used. However, hard snow late in summer in Wyoming is hazardous. Snow is consistently an underestimated climbing medium, ranked second in causes of accidents by this publication. It is also a common terrain for accidents in many of the climbing and outdoor skills schools. (Source: Renny Jackson, Ranger, Grand Teton National Park)

FALL ON ROCK, EXCEEDING ABILITIES

Wyoming, Teewinot

On August 8, Adam Gymrek (22) and Dirk Murphy were descending a couloir on Teewinot's East Face. At 0830, Gymrek slipped while attempting to descend a slab of rock. He fell several feet and twisted his left knee which resulted in his inability to continue the descent. Murphy went for help and by noon Teton Park Ranger Dorward was inserted by helicopter on a nearby ledge. At 1200, after administering first aid, Dorward and Gymrek were short hauled to Lupine Meadows and Gymrek was taken to the hospital for treatment. (Source: Peter Armington, Ranger, Grand Teton National Park)

Analysis

A more accurate judgment of whether the rock slab could be safely descended might have prevented this accident. This is another case in which the party, due to its small size, was unable to facilitate its own rescue. (Source: Phil Powers, NOLS)

OFF ROUTE, INADEQUATE CLOTHING, EXPOSURE

Wyoming, Grand Teton

On August 14, Douglas Cairns (36) and Daniel Cousins (30) decided to attempt the North Ridge after having failed to find their way to the Black Ice Couloir, their original objective. They were forced to bivouac above the "Slab" pitch and woke on the morning of the 15th to foggy, white-out conditions. They gained the Second Ledge which offers an easy traverse off the mountain. Coming upon some old slings, they believed them to be a well-used anchor point and chose to rappel. This put them in the middle of the West Face route. They were unable to pull their ropes. Realizing that the rappel had been a mistake, Cairns spent a couple of hours prussiking back up

the rope. Cousins was unable to prussik up the ropes due to his already deteriorating condition.

At 1330, Exum guide Jim Williams called Jenny Lake Ranger Station from the Lower Saddle and reported that another party had informed him that they had heard calls for help while they were descending the Owen-Spalding route.

At 1650 Williams called in again and reported that he had made visual contact with a climber in need of assistance on the Second Ledge.

After helicopter flights of equipment and personnel to the Lower Saddle, Rangers Alexander and Jackson reached Cairns at 1950. Twenty minutes later, Jackson reached Cousins who was still hanging from locked prussik slings and had an oral temperature of 90.5 F. Cousins was raised to the Second Ledge and was able to walk to a position where he could be short-hauled off the mountain. He was taken to the hospital by ambulance at 2100. Cairns was escorted to the Lower Saddle. (Source: Renny Jackson, Ranger, Grand Teton National Park)

Analysis

Unfamiliarity with the mountain and very poor weather caused this party to make a sequence of decisions that left them helpless. The timely radio call from Exum Guide Service and the very fast and effective response by the National Park rescue team probably saved Cousins' life. (Source: Renny Jackson, Ranger, Grand Teton National Park)

FALL ON ICE—PROBABLY FROM FALLING ROCK, EXCEEDING ABILITIES, INADEQUATE PROTECTION, UNWILLINGNESS TO CHANGE PLANS

Wyoming, Grand Teton

On August 25, James Stamper (27), Jeffrey Jarvi (34), David Riggs (30), and Thomas Burch (35) established a high camp on the Lower Saddle of the Grand Teton. They summited via the Exum Ridge on August 26 and returned to the same high camp. According to interviews with his partners, Stamper had exhibited inadequate technique and judgment during the climb: he climbed before being put on belay, moved faster than the belayer could take up rope, and chose unnecessarily difficult descent lines.

At 0400 on August 27, the four left camp for the Black Ice Couloir. They reached the intersection of the Enclosure Couloir with the Valhalla traverse by 0600. Here, they stopped due to uncertainty about the proper route and spontaneous rockfall. Confusion about the route continued until after 0800.

Throughout this time, Jarvi, Riggs, and Burch considered retreat; Stamper, however, was adamant that he continue the climb regardless of routefinding dilemmas, frequent rockfall, and the lateness of the day. He refused to consider the judgments and instincts of his partners, swearing at them and belittling their skills, commitment, and courage. When his partners decided to abort the climb, Stamper chose to attempt a solo ascent of the couloir. His partners caught glimpses of his progress until 1100. They then returned to camp and continued down to Lupine Meadows, leaving Stamper's tent and gear in place at the Lower Saddle. When he did not return to Lupine Meadows by 1000 the next day, his partners reported him overdue. The Park Service located his body at the base of the Black Ice Couloir during an air search on the after-