

mid-summer appear on Lamb's Slide, it is almost impossible to self-arrest. To prevent a really long fall, it is not very time consumptive to set up a tandem climbing situation by roping up and moving together while attached to placements generally on the right rock wall.

The unique aspect of this accident is the use of portable communications by the citizen in order to expedite the rescue effort. Park Rescue has been contacted via ham radio and cellular telephone an increasing number of times in recent years. Several of these contacts during cases of life-threatening injuries, such as two hikers struck by lightning at the Boulder Field on Longs Peak, resulted in quick medical responses that saved lives. (Source: Jim Detterline, Longs Peak Supervisory Climbing Ranger, Rocky Mountain National Park)

FALL ON ROCK, CLIMBING UNROPED, EXCEEDING ABILITIES Colorado, Rocky Mountain National Park, Little Matterhorn

On August 16, 1992, at 1000, Jon M. Hofstra (23) fell about 1000 feet while descending unroped from the summit of the Little Matterhorn down the fourth class and lower fifth class northeast chimneys route. Partners Todd Feenstra and Andrew Tenbrink were able to continue their descent, reaching Hofstra in an hour. It was determined that Hofstra was dead, and Rocky Mountain National Park Rangers were contacted to conduct a helicopter recovery of the body.

Analysis

Hofstra and his partners were climbing an easy technical route without rope and proper belay techniques. The Hofstra group was an enthusiastic but inexperienced team on a day off from a University field camp. (Source: Jim Detterline, Longs Peak Supervisory Climbing Ranger, Rocky Mountain National Park)

FALL ON ROCK, PLACED INADEQUATE PROTECTION, ICY ROCK Colorado, Rocky Mountain National Park, Longs Peak

On September 19, 1992, at 0830, Lathe Strang (30) fractured his left ankle as he slipped on icy rock while leading the first pitch of Prevertical Sanctuary IV (5.10) on the Diamond face of Longs Peak. Strang was 30 feet above the belay and eight feet above his last piece of protection, a #3.5 Friend. He suffered a 20 foot fall and struck his left foot against rock upon impact from the fall. Climbers George Lowe and Alex Lowe responded to the calls of Erik Hendrix, Strang's partner, and lowered the injured climber down the lower East Face 800 feet. They continued to assist Strang across Mills Glacier and through the tundra to meet with the Rocky Mountain National Park Rescue Unit at Chasm Meadows.

George Lowe and Alex Lowe are to be commended for their efficient, professional rescue of the Strang-Hendrix party. They had completed the East Face lowering before the park service even got the word that there had been an accident.

Analysis

Strang was aware of icy conditions on the Diamond when he attempted his lead. He was hoping that conditions higher on the route would be drier. He had not even reached the 5.9 crux before he slipped on the icy rock. If unable to handle the eccentricities of free

climbing on icy rock, one should either aid the pitch, or at least place protection more frequently. Of course, if either of these alternatives compromises the ability of a party to safely and efficiently finish a route, retreat should be executed. (Source: Jim Detterline, Longs Peak Supervisory Climbing Ranger, Rocky Mountain National Park)

STRANDED, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT, EXCEEDING ABILITIES

Colorado, Rocky Mountain National Park, Lumpy Ridge

On September 2, 1992, at 1615, Nan Derkiss (30) and John Quackenbush became stranded when they got their rope stuck on the second pitch of Pear Buttress II (5.8+) on the Book on Lumpy Ridge. Ranger Scott Metcalfe and Colorado Mountain School guide Lawrence Stuempke ascended to free the Derkiss/Quackenbush rope, and then led the couple on the remainder of the four pitch route using Metcalf's ropes.

Analysis

The second pitch of Pear Buttress begins with a short traverse before a move upward into a long crack system. It is advisable to do the short traverse as a single pitch, and then do the crack system as another pitch. Many parties get hung up at this particular spot. However, any party on a multiple pitch route should be competent at self-rescue. Carrying a set of prusik loops would allow one to anchor the rope and ascend or descend to the source of trouble. (Source: Jim Detterline, Longs Peak Supervisory Climbing Ranger, Rocky Mountain National Park)

AVALANCHE, WEATHER

Colorado, Rocky Mountain National Park, Flattop Mountain

On November 1, 1992, Brad Farnan (30), Todd Martin (24) and two female climbers were practicing snow climbing techniques on the Central Couloir, Northwest Face of Flattop Mountain. The women decided to turn around at the junction with the West Couloir. While descending, they were within the protection of a rock island when they felt what was described as a "strange wind" coming down the Central Couloir, along with one of Martin's gloves. Visibility had been poor all day, and they were unable to establish voice contact. Park Rangers were contacted, and a massive search effort took place in what had turned into the first really major storm of the season, with some rescuers in snow up to their shoulders despite snowshoes. On November 3, the packs of the missing climbers were observed about 400 feet from the top of the climb. As of January 1, 1993, the climbers have not yet been located and are believed dead from avalanche.

Analysis

Farnan was an experienced and respected mountain guide with Colorado Mountain School. This was a trip among friends, and not a CMS class. He had been climbing and guiding in these gullies of Flattop all during the Autumn season without incident. On the day of his disappearance, conditions in the gully were stable and excellent climbing. (He had also been there the day before.) The storm had just begun to blow in when Farnan started climbing, and had not dropped much precipitation at that point. It is believed that the cornice overhanging the route broke while the climbers were taking a break on a ledge.

It was unusual for the cornice to have persisted this late in the season. On this mountain face, the cornices generally form at the beginning of winter, and drop off in late