

fell 15 meters down the rock until the rope came tight through her only protection placement. Screaming in pain when she stopped, Laura managed to climb some five meters back up to the belay.

Her apparent injuries included sprains of both ankles, a sprained thumb, cuts and abrasions of both hands, and abrasions of her seat. Marty put a jacket on her and gave her water, then lowered her down the route, leaving behind a few pitons, several slings, and a lot of blood. He was amazed at how well she endured the descent, as she could not use her hands, but had to use her injured ankles throughout. At the base, Marty taped up Laura's worst ankle, took all their heavy gear in his pack, and helped her to walk out to the road before dark, at about 2200. He then drove her to Canmore Hospital, where she was checked over, given first aid, and told to come back in the morning for X-rays. She had no fractures, but two badly strained finger tendons added to the list of her injuries. (Source: Marty)

Analysis

Laura was wearing a helmet and day pack, which protected her head and back when she fell. The sparse protection may have made her impatient after the crux moves, and may have caused her to rely on handholds without testing them. (Source: Orvel Miskiw)

FALL ON ICE, PLACED NO PROTECTION

Alberta, Rocky Mountains, Mount Aberdeen

About 1700 on August 27, a party of four were descending the north glacier separating the summits of Mts. Aberdeen (3152 meters) and Haddo. On the lower ice tongue (angled about 38 degrees), they were tied in on separate ropes, with R. T. and A. B. descending together on one of them, separated about 20 meters. R. T., who was higher, fell and pulled A. B. off. They both slid about 60 meters onto lower-angled ice, where A. B. managed to self-arrest short of the rocks beyond the glacier. R. T. suffered leg and ankle fractures as well as serious chest injuries likely caused by an ice ax, while A. B. sustained minor knee injuries. They were helped down by their two companions, and a member of another party nearby went out for help and reported the accident to the Banff Warden Service about 1900. The climbers were evacuated by heli-sling and transferred to Banff EMS before nightfall. R. T. was diagnosed with serious internal bleeding, and would likely not have survived the night if he had not been hospitalized.

Analysis

When traveling on bare ice, even with crampons, it is very difficult to self-arrest, or to hold any type of fall without a belay, even on moderate terrain such as this glacier on Mt. Aberdeen. If a rope is necessary for safety, then the use of belays and/or protection is usually required as well. (Source: Marc Ledwidge, Banff National Park Warden Service)

FALL ON ROCK, UNROPED

Alberta, Rocky Mountains, Mount Indefatigable

On September 5, Kananaskis Country rangers were informed that someone had fallen down the East Face of Mt. Indefatigable (2670 meters) from the ridge joining its two peaks. A helicopter was requested, and a search and rescue operation proceeded in bad weather conditions, involving several rangers and Kananaskis Emergency Medical Services. At 1519, about one hour after the initial report was received, J. A., a visitor from

Scotland, was found at 2317 meters on the east face of the mountain, having fallen some 300 meters to her death. Park rangers were transported to her position by helicopter sling to investigate and remove the body to Kananaskis EMS. (Source: George Field, Kananaskis Country Alpine Specialist)

Analysis

J. A. had many years of scrambling experience in Scotland and Europe, and it's not known why she fell. Although her companion reported that conditions were a "reasonable Scottish mist," he says the rock was not slippery. The traverse of Mt. Indefatigable is considered a moderate scramble, and such a rating may lead some to think it presents little or no hazard. But the serious exposure in one or two spots is ample reason to take along a rope and use it to belay in those places. (Source: Orvel Miskiwi)

RAPPEL FAILURE—ERROR IN ANCHORING, INEXPERIENCE

Alberta, Rocky Mountains, Mount Rundle

On September 10, David and Edward, (both 18), from England, and temporary employees of the Banff Springs Hotel, were rock climbing on the lower ridge of Mt. Rundle when an accident occurred in which David fell to his death.

They had climbed easy fifth-class rock about 175 meters above the local practice area, and then moved around onto the east face to rappel off the ridge to easy ground. Edward, the less experienced of the two, states they located a rappel anchor which consisted of a large horn or boulder with a sling around it. David, however, decided to remove and keep the sling, and instead looped the rope directly over the rock. Both climbers then rappelled moderate-angled slabs to a ledge lower on the face.

When they tried to retrieve the rope, it jammed. David decided to climb back up to free the rope. Edward believes David tied himself in to the rope as a safety measure, as he climbed up easily and out of Edward's sight near the top of the pitch. A few minutes later, Edward heard a noise, and saw David fall past him and land on ledges below. The full rope fell with him. Edward called for help and the Park Service and ambulance personnel were summoned.

Analysis

David was out of sight of his partner at the time he fell, so the exact cause is unknown. Edward says he understood that David was going to free the rope and toss it down the pitch rather than rappel. However, when his body was recovered, the rope was rigged as if for rappel or self-belay through a Sticht plate attached to his harness, so it's quite possible that David was setting up to rappel again when he fell. In any case, while both climbers had rappelled before, they were new to this area and may not have been familiar with jammed ropes, a common problem in the Rockies because of the nature of the rock. (Source: Tim Auger, Banff National Park Warden Service)

FALL ON ROCK, UNROPED, NO HARD HAT

Alberta, Rocky Mountains, Tonquin Valley, Surprise Point

Two Japanese members of an Indian Summer Alpine Club Camp at the Wates-Gibson Hut climbed and scrambled up fourth-class terrain of the northeast aspect of Surprise Point (2400 meters) to a peak on its north ridge on September 13. After surmounting some short cliffs, they reached the top at about 1300.