

FALL ON SNOW, LOSS OF CONTROL—VOLUNTARY GLISSADE, INEXPERIENCE

Colorado, Rocky Mountain National Park, Mount Ypsilon

On August 26, Larisa J. Watson (23) and three partners partially ascended the Blitzen Ridge route on Mount Ypsilon when they noticed incoming foul weather and decided to retreat. While glissading the Spectacle Lake Snowfield, Watson lost control and slid 150 feet, impacting on rocks at the bottom of the snowfield. She sustained head and facial injuries, resulting in a two-day rescue effort.

Analysis

Watson was not as experienced as the other team members, and was not familiar with glissading. The team leader glissaded first, but was without an ax. He attempted to stop Watson but aborted when he also began to lose control. The other team members wisely descended by cutting steps. (Source: Jim Detterline and Mark Magnuson, NPS Rangers, RMNP)

OVERDUE, WEATHER, EXHAUSTION, EXCEEDING ABILITIES

Colorado, Rocky Mountain National Park, Longs Peak

On October 21, RMNP dispatch received a missing/overdue climbing party report concerning John McBroom (47) and Terrance Ford (42) on Kiener's Route (III AI), Longs Peak. They were to have returned home on October 20. Searchers were dispatched to the mountain, and they located McBroom and Ford exhausted but otherwise uninjured.

Analysis

McBroom and Ford were the third party within two weeks to have endured an unplanned bivouac on Kiener's Route, resulting in a 40-hour climb and descent of the peak. Similar incidents also have commonly occurred here at this time of the season in other years, resulting in cold injuries and even death. We present this case in the interest of preventing future episodes. Each overdue party underestimated the increased difficulty of the route caused by early winter conditions. Under summer conditions Kiener's Route is a mountaineering classic of easy 5th class climbing and 40- to 50-degree snow and ice. Early winter snows had covered the route with up to 20 inches of poorly-bonded snow resulting in climbing difficulties well beyond those of summer. Also, many groups experience route-finding difficulties due to winter conditions and inexperience. An off-season Kiener's climb requires a conservative attitude. (Source: Jim Detterline and Mark Magnuson, NPS Rangers, RMNP)

(Editor's Note: Tim Ashwood asked us to print a clarification of a few details regarding his accident on Longs Peak reported last year on page 56 of ANAM.

"Here is what happened. The last night we spent on the Diamond we were about 200 feet from the top of the Diamond. The game plan was to finish the Diamond then go the last 200 feet to the top of the mountain, get back down, clean the gear off the Diamond, and get to the boulder field before the afternoon storms. That night I got sick from some bad food and spent the night

throwing up several times. By the next day I had no more food or water in my system and my throat felt like needles sticking it. The quickest way off the Diamond and back down at that time was to go the last 200 feet up, since we already had ropes strung to the top of The Diamond. We had been cleaning up the gear as we went up so we didn't have any gear set up below us. Since I was so sick, we didn't go to the top of the mountain, just the Diamond, then headed straight down to our base camp at Chasm View. We spent the night at Chasm View since it started to storm, then headed down to the boulder field the next morning to meet the Ranger and the horse. I tried to drink a little water, but would just throw it back up; my system would not hold even water down for very long.

I spent about six weeks training in Estes Park, Colorado, before the Diamond push. My cerebral palsy improved so much, I was doing things at the end of the summer I couldn't do at the beginning of the summer. This was my third attempt. The first two were turned back because of weather and time. The third time we allotted 10 days to do the climb in hopes of finding the correct weather window, so there was 'no attitude to summit at all costs' as stated.

Also, there was no ambulance involved. A friend took me to the hospital, where I was treated for food poisoning, which is what caused the low energy levels, nausea, and dehydration, not my cerebral palsy or the inability of my partners and me. When I got back down to the trailhead, my voice was almost gone so I wasn't able to give much detail on what happened to Jim Detterline.")

VARIOUS FALLS ON ROCK

Idaho, City of Rocks National Reserve

This year we only had four reported climbing accidents. Two of these came to our attention only because the parties involved stopped by the Visitor Center to ask for directions to the hospital.

Daniel Hansen (22) fell while attempting Dynamo Hum, a popular 5.10c on Transformer Wall. He missed the correct start and fell from about eight feet up, landing on an erosion control retaining wall. He fractured and dislocated his ankle. This terrace was intentionally positioned such that it would provide a good landing zone should someone come off the start of the route—but not so good a landing zone for Daniel's "variation."

The second accident—which was a self-rescue—happened to Ian McNeill, who sustained a hip injury falling from New Troy, a notorious 5.10cR on Super Hits Wall. We do not know the details, but a fall from the crux would result in a 20-foot-plus ground fall. McNeill may have overestimated his abilities.

The other two involved rescue efforts by City of Rocks personnel. The first one was to Jamie Aghain (35), who was scrambling down the gully from the Crack House at Castle Rocks when he popped a hold and fell head first into a crevice between two boulders. He sustained a subdural hematoma. He was lucky to be in the company of an ER physician and that there happened to be other experienced rescue personnel nearby—because on any given day, there would have been no one within miles, as Castle Rocks is not open to the pub-