

feet off the ground at that instant.

We scrambled over to find him dazed, lying on his back on a hump of ground and rock. The rope ran loosely from him up to the first piece of pro about 15 feet up, and then down, still in a pronounced arc, to the belayer on the boulder above where he landed. The belayer stood looking down and fairly calmly said, “Bummer, man,” but seemed pretty dazed by what he had witnessed and apparently was unable to render assistance at that time.

The boys ran down to the ranger hut at the entrance to the park to summon help. Duncan and I remained with the climber to prevent him from moving and packed our ropes under either side of his torso to take some of the weight off his back, which was lying directly on a ridge of rock.

After about 15 to 20 minutes, a ranger or park employee arrived, said he had EMT training, called in a request on his radio for an ambulance, and began assessment of the climber. By this time both ankles had swollen considerably, but on removal of his shoes, he could move all his toes.

As more assistance arrived, we left to continue our climbing. It appeared to taken a considerable length of time before the climber was finally loaded into an ambulance; my guess is around two-and-a-half hours, in spite of his being approximately 100 to 150 feet from the road, and as I remember, there was some sort of dispute over jurisdiction between different ambulances that arrived. (Source: Randy Roberts—50)

## **FALL ON ICE, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT, INADEQUATE PROTECTION**

### **Colorado, Rocky Mountain National Park, Longs Peak, East Face**

On August 3 at 0700, Jeff Snyder (24) was leading over the icy Mills Glacier to the base of Stetner’s Ledges III (AI 1 5.8) on the East Face of Longs Peak. Snyder had planned to fix anchors in rock at the base of Stetner’s Ledges and then belay Joe Verela, Jr. and Joseph Verela, Sr. (ages unknown) across the ice. Snyder was using the party’s only ice ax and was wearing winter driveway gripper-type cleats over his shoes in place of crampons. Snyder was 60 feet out on the AI 1 ice without protection and only 10 feet away from rock protection possibilities when he lost his footing and began sliding. Snyder slid approximately 35 feet before self-arresting. He lacerated his right knee on sharp rock protruding from the ice. Snyder then dropped the ice ax to Joe Verela, Jr. so that Verela could get to him and help. However, before Verela could get to Snyder, Snyder lost his position and slid the remaining distance to the rocks. Verela bandaged Snyder’s knee and went for help. Rocky Mountain National Park rescuers responded and evacuated Snyder by litter and Flight For Life medical helicopter to Fort Collins, CO. Snyder underwent one hour of surgery and received 30 staples to repair the 10-inch long laceration.

### **Analysis**

In this case, shortcuts led to long lacerations. It is a common yet sometimes dangerous practice among alpinists to skim on equipment in order to cut back on weight. The Snyder party had only one ax and no real crampons among three persons. Modern ice axes are very lightweight, and there are many models of crampons to choose from that will work on a hiking boot in this sort of

terrain. Also, the leader did not protect this section, which might have helped to offset the lack of proper crampons. One method of placing protection here, yet saving on weight, would have been to cut bollards into the ice and sling them. It was an easy section of ice, yet slippery and dangerous, as is the nature of ice.

Snyder did execute a proper self arrest, which minimized his injuries. Unfortunately, when he gave up the team's only ice ax to his partner, he was unable to hold his position. (Source: Jim Detterline, Mark Magnuson, Mark Ronca—Rangers, Rocky Mountain National Park)

## **TRANSIENT ISCHEMIC ATTACK (TIA)**

### **Colorado, Rocky Mountain National Park, Glacier Gorge**

At 12:15 pm on August 5, I (43) suffered a transient ischemic attack (TIA) four pitches up The Barb on Spearhead.

As I belayed Kelli's (my climbing partner) lead of the fourth pitch I began to have strange sensations in my left leg. The small stance I was standing on was cramped, and I tried to shake things off without success. Gradually, over a period of about 15 minutes (and as Kelli completed the 40-meter pitch and arrived at the next belay) I lost the ability to weight the leg, and noticed my left hand going numb. As she put me on belay, I yelled up that I was having some troubles but would try to climb anyway. I cleaned the belay anchor and attempted to climb but could not move. At this point we decided to retreat. There was only one other party on the face, high on Syke's Sickle, so our efforts would have to be unaided. I reset the anchors, and after a brief discussion we decided Kelli would down-climb the upper part of the pitch (runout face climbing, by the way) to within the 30-meter mark of the rope and set an anchor to lower off of and clean the pitch. By the time she reached me at the belay I was losing the ability to speak and could no longer keep my body positioned upright. However I did not suffer any loss of consciousness or mental function.

Below us were a series of overhangs that would make a plumb line rappel retreat to the ground impossible with a single 60-meter rope. We were about 25 meters above Middle Earth, a variable ledge system that crosses the entire face. I suggested the best way off would be to traverse Middle Earth to the route Syke's Sickle where I knew rap anchors were. We set anchors and rappelled to the ledge (I was able to use my right hand to brake and just let the left side of my body bump and slide against the wall), and then Kelli led across the ledge system, placing gear where necessary so I could pull on it as I dragged myself to follow. We found anchors on Syke's Sickle and after two more rappels were on the ground.

Kelli ran to some fellow climbers packing up to leave, and one of them began to run out to the trailhead for help while his partners came to my aid. Through a series of fantastic coincidences, Geoff Friefeld, a doctor friend of mine (albeit a breast cancer specialist) was at Black Lake and had a brand new set of walkie-talkies. His party started back to the trailhead as he immediately ran up to lend us assistance. Through a series of radio relays, word reached the