

## **FALL ON ROCK, PRE-EXISTING CONDITION**

### **Colorado, Eldorado Canyon State Park, Redgarden Wall**

On Saturday, September 25 Maria Petzolt (26) dislocated her shoulder unexpectedly while pulling on a hold on the fourth pitch of Ruper (5.8), a 6-pitch route on the Redgarden Wall. Maria had dislocated the same shoulder five weeks earlier on another outing. Her male climbing partner lowered her to a secure position a few feet lower and called 911 on his cell phone. When rescuers arrived, they administered medication and reduced the shoulder after a few attempts. Ms. Petzolt was tandem-lowered to the base of the wall. She refused an ambulance and was transported to a hospital in a private vehicle. (Source: Steve Muehlhauser, Park Ranger, Eldorado Canyon State Park)

### **Analysis**

Many people have a pre-disposition to spontaneous shoulder dislocations. If a climber knows about this, he or she can compensate by taking care on how far to reach and how much leverage to exert. (Source: Jed Williamson)

## **FALL ON ICE/ SNOW, CLIMBING UNROPED, POOR CONDITIONS**

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

On October 16, a party of three started up the Taylor Glacier. The Taylor Glacier is a 40–60 degree 1,500-foot permanent snowfield in Rocky Mountain National Park. Two weeks prior, James Patrick (54), the leader of the group had attempted the route and turned around due to poor snow conditions and black ice. Also, it would have been hard to ignore the late season conditions that exposed much loose rock and dirt inside the couloir. Now, the glacier was partially covered with ten inches of snow that had fallen 5 days prior. It was the first measurable snowfall of the year and did not bond well to the existing layer of black ice nor did it do more than barely cover up the loose rock and dirt. Starting up the route at first light and climbing unroped, the first 1,000 feet of the route went easily as they were able to stay in the main couloir and avoid sections of black ice and loose rock. At this point, the party took a break and discussed options: to continue in the main couloir and climb the steep headwall or break left on a weakness that appeared to be easier.

The party chose to follow the left line because it looked easier. Encountering a few short steep steps, one member of the party felt uneasy, and another member belayed her using a long piece of webbing. The going became a little slower as the party had to navigate around patches of black ice and carefully cross steep sections of loose rock that were covered with only a few inches of snow.

With the group's only rope in his backpack, the leader of the group chose to continue soloing the final steep headwall before exiting onto the ridge. As he climbed the 50–60 degree headwall that was covered by patches of