



AAC Publications

Fall On Rock – Scrambling, Loose Rock, Climbing Alone

Canada, Alberta, Kananasis County, Mt. Smuts

On Sunday, August 12, a 27-year-old male climber was attempting a scrambling route on Mt. Smuts (2,938 meters). He did not check in that evening, and on August 13 his lifeless body was discovered by Kananaskis Emergency Services at the base of a 300-meter cliff. It appeared to first responders that he had stepped on some loose rock and fallen.

ANALYSIS

This climber was an experienced scrambler. The exact circumstances of his fall are unknown, but the standard south ridge route on Mt. Smuts is considered one of the Canadian Rockies' most difficult scrambling routes—that is, a route that is often done without a rope (though many choose to use a rope). This route likely would be graded low fifth-class. Decisions made in the mountains regarding when to scramble and when to rope up are governed by many factors, including the party's competence and experience, the quality of the rock, the weather, and the availability of protection for roped climbing. In this case, the climber was alone, so his options were limited. (Sources: Published reports and the Editors.)

Images

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