



AAC Publications

Crevasse Fall — Climbing Unroped

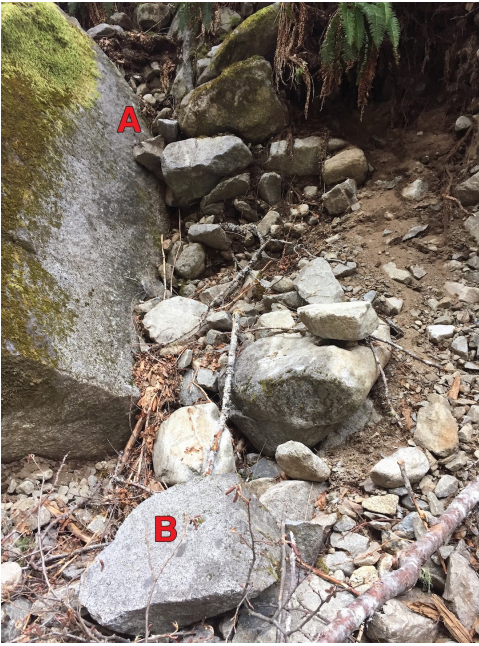
Washington, Glacier Peak Wilderness, Kololo Peaks

On September 5, Jake Robinson (26) and a partner were traversing below a rock wall near the head of the Suiattle Glacier on Kololo Peaks, at 8,000 feet in elevation. The climbers were unroped, and Jake suddenly plunged into a hidden hole and disappeared. After calling out and getting no response, the partner activated an inReach device. When a search and rescue crew arrived by helicopter, they lowered a team member into the hole, and it was found that Jake had died from injuries in the fall and from drowning.

ANALYSIS

Unseen beneath the snow at this location was a large bergschrund, an ice dome, and a glacial tarn about 20 feet wide and 50 feet below the surface. Although nearby crevasses were visible from the air, the bergschrund was hidden from view in the direction the climbers were traveling, with no indentations or other signs of thin snow. It is not uncommon to cross this low-angle glacier unroped, but crevasses and holes may be found on any glacier in any season. Robinson was very experienced in the Cascades. In June 2019, he became the youngest person to complete the Bulger List of Washington's highest peaks. (Sources: Snohomish County Sheriff's Office and the Editors.)

Images



Whether exploring boulderfields or attempting high peaks, many climbers are injured by loose rock during their approaches and descents. (A) Here, a climber's fingers were crushed against the slab at left when his foothold and handhold broke free. (B) The large block that pulled loose.

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