

Accident on Schuylkill

Location: Crested Butte Area

Date of Observation: 02/19/2018

Name: Ben Pritchett and Evan Ross

Subject: Accident on Schuylkill

Aspect: North East, East

Elevation: 11,300'

Avalanches:

PRELIMINARY DETAILS of an avalanche accident on Schuylkill Ridge in Birthday Bowl area.

2 skiers descended into the skier right side of Birthday Bowl. After a short first pitch, skier 1 was skiing to the right of the Birthday Bowl gully, while skier 2 was posted uphill of skier 1 watching from some distance below the ridge.

Skier 1 heard skier 2 yell, saw snow moving around him, was caught in the slide briefly and pulled under the snow. After popping back to the surface he was able to exit and arrest by grabbing a tree, moving maybe 100' downhill. Skier 1 sustained lower leg injuries and lost some gear. After calling 911 to initiate a rescue response learned that skier 2 had already called 911. Relieved that his partner had called 911 too, skier 1 walked down the skier's right side of the path to the toe of the debris and found skier 2's partial burial site and tracks heading downhill.

When the avalanche released, skier 2 yelled to warn skier 1 but was pulled off his feet from his stationary position and carried downhill approximately 1000' vertical feet in a very rough ride. He sustained substantial injuries along the way from impacts with trees. After coming to rest partially buried on the debris pile, skier 2 initially switched their transceiver to search and did not find a signal. He too contacted 911. Severely injured and without any information about the position of his partner yet, he then began to crawl downhill.

CB SAR rescuers contacted both parties a short distance downhill of the debris, and evacuated both parties for further medical care.