Skier caught in avalanche on Saddle Peak

Date
Fri, 12/16/2022 - 01:15
Activity
Skiing

I got to the top of the south summit around 11am with lots of active wind loading. I traversed the ridge line for a couple hundred feet, kicking away at small cornices to see if I could trigger anything. Got two small 6-8” deep soft slabs to propagate 10’ wide and a couple hundred vertical but nothing major. The ridge line is too rocky to traverse right now so I dropped onto the face, still staying near the ridge line. A hundred feet or so further across my traverse, it got deep. Cross loading from the north grew a drift that was thigh deep at least. Very cautiously I tried to regain some elevation to get above anything that might pop off. A few steps up the drift, I heard a whumph and it started to slide. I would estimate 2-4’ deep, 150’ wide. It immediately caught my skis and started taking me down. I pointed them down hill and started to pick up speed hoping I could cut out of it. It started getting very deep and turbulent so after 200-300’ I pulled my airbag, while still trying to stay on my feet. Thankfully, I was able to stay up and cut out of the slide roughly 500’ below the summit. It ran full length into the bottom of Argentina bowl and south gut with a massive powder cloud. Way too close of a call. I skied down the avalanche path then back to the resort with my airbag deployed in case of any other slides coming down. Made it back to the resort touched base with ski patrol to alert them of the slide, give them information on my condition and the possibility of other skiers out there (no possibility, I was first person up and didn’t see anyone ascending from the gate when I crossed to south summit) and headed home.

Region
Bridger Range
Location (from list)
Saddle Peak