

French 16-year-old free climbing prodigy Luce Douady plummets 500ft to her death after slipping and falling off cliff

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Teenage French climbing champion Luce Douady has died at the age of 16 after she fell from an Alpine cliff.

Luce Douady, pictured during the IFSC Climbing Youth World Championships in Arco, 2019, fell 500 feet to her death in the French alps while climbing with friends

Douady was walking to a climbing spot with a group of friends near Grenoble when she fell 500 feet while crossing an exposed path.Â

The 16-year-old seen as a potential future Olympian in a sport which was due to feature in the Games for the first time in the rescheduled Tokyo showpiece.

She was already in the French climbing team and had already won a bronze medal in a European senior event in addition to a junior world championship title.Â

The French climbing federation hailed her as a 'very promising' climber with 'the future before her' while her club paid tribute to a 'beautiful person' and a 'young woman full of energy, passion, talents'.

Luce Douady fell to her death near Saint-Pancrasse in southern France, not far from Grenoble

Douady was walking to a climbing spot with a group of friends near Grenoble when she fell 500 feet while crossing an exposed path (pictured is a cliff face in the same area)

Mountain police in Haute Savoie confirmed the news, telling Euronews that she had fallen 500 feet (150 metres) and that an investigation had been opened.

Douady was walking on an exposed path near Crolles and Saint-Pancrasse when she slipped and fell, French media said.Â

Initial investigations have found that Douady had likely not secured her cable properly to the handrail in the challenging pass, despite being familiar with the cliff, police said. They noted that this type of accident is rare in the area.

Douady would have turned 17 in November.

'Luce was a very promising young athlete from the French climbing team,' the French Mountain Climbing Federation (FFME) wrote in a statement on its website.

'At only 16, the future was before her. This terrible news hit her training comrades, her coaches and her club, ChambÃ©ry Escalade hard. But today, the whole federation is in mourning. We obviously think of her family and we will

be at their disposal.'

'Luce Douady was a in love with all facets of climbing, capable of major achievements in natural sites,' the statement concluded.

The 2024 Paris Olympics committee tweeted a picture of Douady, writing: 'Luce Douady was a promising talent of French climbing, a true champion who had so many summits to climb. Immense sadness and thoughts for her loved ones.'

Pictured: Luce Douady controls a hold for points during the IFSC Climbing Vail World Cup on June 8, 2019, in Vail, Colorado.

Luce Douady, pictured with Natsumi Hirano of Japan (left) and Saki Kikuchi of Japan (right) during the IFSC Climbing Youth World Championships Arco 2019 Boulder Youth A Women Award Ceremony at Iconic Rockmaster Climbing Stadium in Arco, Italy, August 31 2019

In a post on their Facebook page, her climbing club put out a message as well, writing: 'Luce, this girl, this young woman full of energy, passions, talents! A beautiful person! She left the way she lived, to the full!

'Now it's her family, friends we're thinking of. We share the immense emptiness, the pain, the pain... Be strong for her memory! Forever forever, Luce!'

Douady won the world junior bouldering championships in 2019 and came third in the adult European Difficulty Championship in the same year.

She also came fifth in women's bouldering in Vail, Colorado at the International Federation of Sport Climbing Boulder World Cup last year.

Bouldering is a form of rock climbing that does not use a rope or harness, and is performed on smaller rocks or artificial walls.

Climbing was due to make its Olympic debut at the Tokyo Games this summer, although these have been postponed until 2021 because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Luce Douady was seen as one of the brightest young talents in the sport, which will be introduced to the Olympics in Tokyo next year

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