

on June 3, Cladouhos was carried, flown, and then driven to the hospital. (Source: John Christiansen, Ranger, Yosemite National Park)

PROTECTION FAILED, FALL ON ROCK

California, Yosemite Valley

At 0845 on June 20, 1989, Kent Kroeker (31) came to my residence saying that his climbing partner, Joe Kristy (43) had fallen on El Capitan and had broken his hip. I escorted him to the SAR Cache where he met with Shift Supervisor Mike Mayer.

Kroeker said that Kristy had taken a leader fall on the 30th pitch on June 19 at 1300. They completed the route with Kristy jumarring. They spent the night on the top. Kroeker said he left Kristy the following morning to go for help.

Mayer ordered helicopter 51 for evacuation. A helitack crew was dropped on El Cap, then went to El Cap meadow to pick up Park Medic Kerry Maxwell and Bob Howard. When we arrived, Kristy was sitting up by a tree. He was evacuated by litter into the helicopter and transferred to the clinic. X-rays at the clinic showed that Kristy had a broken femur at the trochanter. (Source: Greg Jackson, Ranger, Yosemite National Park)

Analysis

At the clinic, Kristy told me that he was starting on the 30th pitch, climbing to his left. He said he was standing with his left foot in an etrier, that was attached to a fixed Copperhead. He was standing there for about ten seconds when he was saying to himself, "I'm off route." At that time, the Copperhead blew, Kristy fell and started penduluming to his right. The next piece of protection was described by Kristy as a 3/4" (1.9 cm) sling in a one-meter loop around a rock about two meters down and to the right. That sling blew, and he continued penduluming to his right, to another sling. That second sling was described as an 11/16" (1.7 cm) runner which was two meters to the right of the previous sling. It also broke. About one meter to the right of the second sling was a bolt by a dihedral. The bolt held, and Kristy continued his pendulum into the dihedral, where he impacted about ten meters below the bolt. Kristy estimated he fell 20 meters total.

He said he then climbed up to the bolt, and pulled his haul bag up. He said that he was going to continue the pitch, then started, but could not continue because of the pain. Kroeker, who was on belay, then took the lead. The two were able to make it to the top by Kristy jumarring up, arriving at the top around 2130. (Source: Greg Jackson, Ranger, Yosemite National Park)

STRANDED, CLIMBING ALONE, INEXPERIENCE

California, Joshua Tree National Monument

On June 29, 1989, my daughter and I were alerted by tourists that somebody was yelling for help on the back side of Intersection Rock. Upon inspection, we found a solo climber stranded approximately 20 meters off the ground on "The Flake" (5.8).

Not having climbed the route before, we found a climber in the vicinity who knew the route. We gave him enough equipment to facilitate reaching the subject. Our rescuer was able to get an end of rope to him.

I yelled and asked what kind of belt was holding his chalk bag on. He replied, "Nylon webbing tied with a square knot." Thus we found out that he was a novice and had never tied in to a real belay.

Not to trust his web waist belt, we had him tie the rope end around his waist with three wraps and a square knot, with "lots of wraps" around the ends. This was all he could understand. Upon gaining confidence of the anchor from below, he climbed up a meter and clipped into a fixed bolt. He rested long enough to be lowered off the bolt to the ground. Our rescuer followed, and he cleaned the route. (Source: Pierre Bustanoby)

Analysis

The victim, age 25, is one of many novices stranded and/or benighted in Joshua Tree this year. As has been mentioned before, this area attracts people with little or no experience because of its easy access. (Source: J. Williamson)

FALLING ROCK

California, Mount Whitney

On July 29, 1989, Rob Weingruber (22) and Walker White (23) were climbing the East Face route on Mount Whitney. They had reached the Grand Staircase (about 1500 meters below the summit) when Rob was struck on the helmet and back by a basketball-sized rock. The rock had been dislodged by the rope of a team climbing above them. The team whose rope had dislodged the rock quickly climbed down to help. They found Rob unconscious. While bringing Walker up to their level, Rob regained consciousness. He complained of back pain and was bleeding from the mouth. It was decided that Rob may have suffered a broken back and internal injuries. Walker stayed with Rob while the other two climbers went for help. It was later determined that while Rob would have a sore head and back for a while, there were no significant injuries, but the rescue team was pretty concerned in the meantime. Rob still needed assistance to reach the summit, which was provided by CLMRG and others. (Source: Dennis Burge, China Lake Mountain Rescue Group)

Analysis

This is a popular route with lots of parties so everyone must be more careful. Rob would have sustained much more severe injuries had he not been wearing a safety helmet. (Source: Dennis Burge, China Lake Mountain Rescue Group)

FALL ON ROCK, CLIMBING SOLO, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT, INEXPERIENCE

California, Yosemite National Park, Cathedral Peak

On August 22, 1989, Pat Teague at the Valley SAR cache received a telephoned report of a climbing accident on Cathedral Peak. According to the reporting party, Christopher Wear (44), his companion, identified as Yohosame Cameron (20), had fallen about 20 meters and suffered a head injury and an injury to his lower right leg. Wear reported that Cameron's leg was "hanging by a thread."

Ranger Hargis was in the vicinity of Crane Flat in the Toulumne ambulance. Hargis