

chors for separate belay stances when Mistretta dislodged a rock described by Lanza as being two feet by three feet by several inches thick. The other three climbers were 150 feet below anchored together. Rick Baron tried to protect the other two climbers by shielding them with his body. He was struck by a cantaloupe sized rock above his left eye. His helmet was knocked off and he was thrown backwards eight or ten feet down the slope before his anchor stopped him. He did not regain consciousness and died probably within fifteen minutes.

Analysis

If possible, the belay site should be away from the line of fall of anything dislodged by the leader. This is especially important on higher and less stable cliffs like Cannon and Katahdin. In this case, two leaders were climbing above three other people who were close together at a belay anchor.

Irwin Caverly, the park director, said, "Rock slides are infrequent. This was one of those freak accidents." Michael Lanza said that when the group registered at the ranger station, a ranger suggested they change their planned route, and they did. Lanza added that it was not a particularly difficult climb. "One of the most frustrating things was that the route we took was well below our ability level." He and Rich Baron, who was the eighteenth person to die climbing in Baxter State Park, had been friends for twenty years and had done countless climbs together. (Source: George Hurley and Michael Lanza)

FALL ON ROCK

Maryland, Carderock

On May 16, I was half way up Jan's Face, a climb at the north end of the Carderock Climbing Area, when we heard someone calling, in a weak voice, "HELP, I think I have broken my leg." I called back, "We will be right there," and asked for a ride from my belayer. A woman climbing next to me and I started toward the sound of his voice.

I was about two steps behind her when we arrived at the patient. I said, "Hi, I am Art Dodds, an Emergency Medical Technician, and may I help you?" I was more surprised by the response from the woman than from Joe, the patient. She said, "Oh, thank God you are here!" It made me wonder what she was planning to do when she got there. I put on my gloves (I carry some in my wallet) and began my exam. I had no other gear. He had a probable broken fibula just above the right ankle and an abrasion to the knee. A quick neurological and pulses revealed nothing remarkable. I splinted his ankle with his jacket and the webbing he was using for a harness. The mechanism of injury was a fall while bouldering. He believed he did not hit his head or lose consciousness.

My problem was, should I call 911? The last time 911 was called, they responded with two ambulances, three fire trucks, and a Park Service helicopter for a similar injury. A news media helicopter also showed up. They also blocked the parking lot for about two hours while they hauled the litter up the cliff. The place where the incident happened is about 1,000 feet from the parking lot and down a 40 foot cliff.

Joe was eager to get to his car and believed he could hobble with some help. Great. I got on one side and another climber got the other. Once we got to level ground, I got him on my back and we walked to the parking lot. I had told Joe I would drive his car to the hospital ten minutes away if he would wait until I got my gear down. He elected to remove the splint and drive his car, standard transmission, to the hospital in Frederick, Maryland, about a 40-minute drive. I wished him well.

On the way to get my gear, I ran into three members of Maryland SAR. They said, "What have you been up to?" "Oh, I just finished a rescue." They thought I was joking until they noticed I was removing my rubber gloves to shake hands. (Source: Art Dodds, via Peter McCabe)

FALL ON ROCK—BLOCK OF ROCK CAME OFF, PROTECTION PULLED OUT, ROPE SHEATH CUT, NO HARD HAT

Maryland, Delaware Water Gap, Mount Tammany

On March 12, before noon, Ralph Chang (36), Bruce Pollock, and Randall Fairman began lead climbing on Mount Tammany. All three are experienced lead climbers. At 1245 Chang began to lead a climb called "Friends in High Places" (5.7). At 1300 Chang took a lead fall while trying to place a piece of protection. A climber from another group contacted National Park Service dispatch by portable phone at 1323 with information about the fall. Nine rangers performed a belayed carryout of approximately 750 feet. Chang was loaded into an ambulance at 1616.

The three had made a couple of climbs before Chang began the lead on "Friends in High Places." When Chang was approximately 40 feet from the base, he attempted to place a piece of protection. The block he was standing on gave way. He fell four to six feet onto his placed protection. This piece pulled from the rock. He fell to his next piece, which held, stopping the fall approximately 20 feet from the ground. His belayer (Pollock) lowered him to the ground.

When the Hasty Medical Ranger (Shreffler) arrived on scene at 1410, he found Chang at the base of the climb. Chang was in a sitting position, leaning against Pollock. Chang's chief complaint was pain in the left shoulder and cervical spine area. A C-collar was put on, and primary/secondary surveys done. Pollock maintained stabilization until Ranger Mennenoh arrived at 1445. Mennenoh and Shreffler prepared Chang for the carryout. The High Angle Rescue Team arrived at the scene at 1502. Chang was packaged in the Stokes litter and the belayed carryout began at 1520 along the base of the ridge and over large boulders. At 1609, Interstate 80 (west lane) was closed by NJ State Police. Chang was loaded into Portland Ambulance and enroute to the hospital at 1616. I-80 was immediately opened to traffic.

Chang suffered a dislocated left shoulder and a laceration on the scalp. He was released from the hospital later that evening.

Analysis

Each climber had eight to ten years of climbing experience and had climbed in the Delaware Water Gap area. Chang was using a Maxim 11mm static rope for the climb. The sheath on the rope was cut and pulled apart, with the core receiving little damage. Pollock and Fairman were wearing helmets; Chang was not. All had climbing shoes and newer climbing hardware. (Source: Richard Shreffler, Medical Ranger, Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area)

(Editor's Note: The rock formation here has sharp edges exposed throughout, which is probably why the sheath on the rope got cut. The sheath on static rope is a little tougher than on dynamic rope.

At this same site, one other legitimate climber accident (as opposed to the many scrambler accidents) occurred to a youth (23) in a scouting group. He was being lowered, then