

### **Analysis**

Three important factors should always be considered when setting up any belay: Anchor (SRENE: Strong, Redundant, Equalized, No Extension), friction (belay device), and position (climber in relationship to his/her anchor and direction of pull). In this case, the leader ignored his position in relation to the direction of pull and the dynamics of a potential fall. The climber should have positioned himself below the anchor rather than above it, in either a sitting or hanging belay with the belay device attached to the harness. Redirecting the rope in a hanging belay can be done more efficiently, especially if the belayer is facing the anchors. Or the leader may have had more control if the belay device was attached directly to the belay anchor via a Munter hitch, GriGri, or other device suitable for this purpose. This approach may have given the belayer more options, especially in executing a belay escape and assisting his partner, or the leader could have climbed through the overhang and set up his belay—the preferred set-up. (Source: Aram Attarian)

## **INADEQUATE WATER—DEHYDRATION, EXHAUSTION**

### **North Carolina, Moore's Wall, Sentinel Buttress**

At approximately 1800 on June 6, I received a radio communication from seasonal office assistant Ryan Moorefield. He had received a call from Stokes County Communications that a climber on Moore's Wall had phoned 911 by cell phone to advise of an unconscious climber. I arrived at the scene (the base of Sentinel Buttress) at 1820 and was advised by the individuals on the scene that a climber, Jason Blevins (19), had been approximately 50 feet from the top of the climb when he passed out from dehydration and exhaustion (all Blevins had to drink this day was a half can of soda). Two climbers, Zack Blevins and Jesse Kale (not part of the climbing party), helped lower Jason onto a large ledge approximately 100 feet from the base of the climb. At this time Blevins regained consciousness but was disoriented. When I arrived, I spoke with Kale, who stated that Jason was conscious and speaking with no obvious injuries but requested water. While awaiting the arrival of Stokes Mountain Rescue, water was passed up to them via rope. Mountain rescue arrived at approximately 1845 and was led to a point directly above the climbers by myself and Ranger Joe Deppe. Mountain Rescue members rappelled to the climbers and assisted them to the base of the climb. Blevins was carried out to an awaiting ambulance by Mountain Rescue and Fire department personnel via Stokes Basket. Blevins was examined by medical personnel and signed a refusal to receive further medical assistance form. (Source: Craig D. Standridge, Hanging Rock State Park)

### **Analysis**

Staying hydrated is an important consideration when exercising in any environment. This is especially true when climbing in North Carolina (or other temperate environments) during the hot and humid summer months. It's not uncommon to lose one liter of sweat during one hour of exertion. This incident reminds climbers to make sure that they remain hydrated throughout the climbing experience. Climbers should establish a water-drinking regimen in order to maximize performance. It's recommended that water be ingested prior

to exercise and repeated every 15 or 20 minutes. Drinking a half can of soda for an entire day of climbing is clearly inadequate.

This rescue effort required over 140 hours of volunteer labor (26 people x 5.5 hours)! This is why climbers should familiarize themselves with basic partner and self-rescue skills in order to facilitate their own rescue. (Source: Aram Attarian)

## **FALL ON ICE, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT—DULL CRAMPONS** **Oregon, Mount Hood, South Side**

On March 23, two climbers (both 22) were descending the South Side standard route on Mount Hood. One of the climbers lost his footing at the “Pearly Gates” (roughly 11,000 feet) and took a tumbling fall down the Hogs Back, coming to rest near the Devils Kitchen (10,300 feet). Injuries included various abrasions and a severely sprained ankle. Both climbers appeared to be responsible individuals and were both certified Wilderness First Responders able to assess and treat the injuries at hand.

Given the icy conditions and rapidly decreasing visibility, a call was placed to Timberline Lodge ski patrol to inform them of the accident. Both climbers were fairly self-sufficient and intended to attempt a self-improvised rescue. Coincidentally two members of Portland Mountain Rescue (PMR) were in the immediate area and were informed of the injured climber by another party on the mountain. Due to the steep icy conditions and limited visibility, the climbers requested assistance with the evacuation from the PMR members.

Starting at the Hogs Back, the patient was lowered several pitches to the 9400 foot level near Triangle Moraine. At this point the terrain angle eased off enough to allow the patient to hobble off the mountain using ski poles with self-arrest grips as an improvised crutch. Two rescuers followed the patient using short tag lines as a belay. Once arriving at the top of the Palmer lift (8500 feet), a snow cat was able to provide transportation back to Timberline Lodge.

### **Analysis**

Upon arriving at Timberline Lodge, the patient’s crampons were inspected. The crampons were rented from an outdoor store and the points were very dull. It is conceivable that the dull crampon points were not sharp enough to bite in to the ice encountered at the Pearly Gates—and possibly contributed to the uncontrolled fall. Whenever renting mountaineering equipment, it is a good idea to thoroughly inspect the equipment and verify that it is in adequate shape for the conditions you think you may encounter.

Depending on the comfort level of the climbers, the use of a running belay may have been warranted considering the icy conditions on the steep slope. The use of a running belay certainly could have minimized the extent of the fall.

There are two additional worthwhile comments. First, when considering a possible self-rescue, it is important to be certain you are familiar with the terrain and any possible difficulties the rescue effort might encounter. In this instance the climbers could have lowered the patient over a cliff on the wrong side of Crater Rock, or descended the wrong side of mountain due to white-out conditions. Do not attempt a self-rescue if it may cause the victim’s condi-