

FALL ON ROCK, HANDHOLD BROKE OFF, INADEQUATE PROTECTION

Missouri, Henley Wall

Dave Ogradowczyk (age unknown) was climbing at the Henley Wall in Henley, Missouri with two of his students and another friend. Both Dave and his belayer were wearing helmets during the incident. The belayer was secured to a tree with an adequate anchor. There was no extra slack in the rope.

Dave was attempting a climb called "Blackbeard," a 5.9 mixed route. The route headed up the cliff to a ledge (easy climbing, protection poor), proceeded up a steep face (5.9 climbing, 4 bolts), then finished up a relatively easy face with pretty good protection.

Dave climbed up to the first ledge and clipped the first bolt easily. He continued up the steep face clipping the next three bolts. A little further up, he placed a #1 Camalot. He climbed another 15 feet. Here, he opted not to place another piece (placement was poor) as he needed to make only one more relatively easy move before clipping into the chain anchor.

The move required Dave to mantel a small shelf. He located a possible hand hold, gave it a tug, and determined it was strong enough to support his weight. Just as he committed to making the move, however, the rock broke from the cliff and went tumbling down. Dave fell about 30 feet. As he stopped at the end of the rope, he impacted the cliff with his left foot.

The belayer lowered him to the ground. His left ankle was swollen and treated with ice. Further x-rays revealed that Dave had fractured his medial malleolus (inner ankle) bone.

Analysis

It is possible that Dave could have placed another piece of protection before committing to the final move of the climb, but this does not ensure that he would not have gotten hurt. The place for protection was marginal for taking a piece of gear.

Dave believes that the real cause of injury was attributed to a previous injury in which his left leg was surgically repaired with a tibial rod and screws. When he impacted the cliff, it was his left foot that took the force. The force was applied to his ankle where the screws affixed the tibial rod. His ankle broke in just this spot. (Source: Local climber, name unknown)

FALL ON ROCK, EXPOSURE, DARKNESS

Nevada, Red Rocks Canyon, Epinephrine

On October 30, climbers Joel Geerling (24) and Chris Pannucci (25) left the Black Velvet Canyon parking lot at 0530, arriving at the base of 18-pitch Epinephrine (5.9) by 0630. The pair had previously climbed Crimson Chrysalis (9-pitch, 5.8+) and Dream of Wild Turkeys (7-pitch, 5.10-) at Red Rocks in March of 2003. They planned a one-day ascent of Epinephrine and did not bring a second rope or bivy gear outside of two emergency space blankets. After