

climbing a 5.10 route on the right side of the buttress, most likely Urban Sprawl (10a). When Doug reached the chains, he clipped in and cleaned the draws, as no one else planned to climb the route. He untied, threaded the rope through the chains, and tied back in. At this point he was still on belay, but with lots of slack in the rope. His plan was to have his belayer lower him. Because of an overhang below him, he and the belayer had a hard time seeing or hearing each other. Doug leaned out for a better look and yelled, "Take."

As he did, his feet slipped and he fell 60 feet to the ground, with the rope running through the belay device. He suffered a fractured sacrum, and bruised heels and sternum. Two friends ran to the road to call for a rescue. SAR team members immobilized Doug in a bean-bag vacuum splint and lowered him five pitches down and across scree fields to the trail. Once at the road, he was transported to the hospital by ground ambulance.

Analysis

Even with lots of slack in the rope, an attentive belayer should be able to catch a top-rope fall without any difficulty. The problem is that in this situation, where the climber re-rigs at the top of the route, the belayer may stop paying close attention, since a fall is not expected.

The belayer was using an ATC, which is a fairly low-friction belay device. Once the rope starts sliding quickly, there is almost no way to stop the moving rope.

Communication problems between climber and belayer produce an accident in our area every few years. Doug could have minimized the need for communication by rappelling down instead of being lowered. This is also a better choice for preserving the chains at the top of the route. (Tom Moyer, Salt Lake County Sheriff's Search and Rescue)

(Editor's Note: There was another Utah rappel/lowering incident reported in which the climber failed to tie his webbing sling properly. The knot came undone when weighted and he fell 30 feet to the ground, sustaining only bruises!)

VARIOUS FALLS ON ROCK, SOME SOLO, SOME INADEQUATELY PROTECTED, ETC.

Utah, Various Locations

We received some sketchy reports on several other accidents in Utah. They are summarized as follows.

On March 2, Robert Moor (35) fell 100 feet to his death when the ice he was attached to broke off. He was climbing with a friend in Sanpete County's Maple Canyon when the ice broke away from the face. Moore died on impact. It is suspected that weather related freeze/thaw was a contributing factor.

At 7:00 p.m. on May 29, a 21-year-old man was free-soloing with some friends at the Moss Ledges picnic area when he apparently slipped on a wet rock and fell backward into the creek. Witnesses said the man fell approxi-

mately 15 feet and landed on his head. County search and rescue volunteers and paramedics reached the man quickly and a life-flight helicopter was on hand waiting to transport, but the victim died at the scene.

On July 11, Tim Roberts (36) of Salt Lake City, sustained several broken vertebrae when he fell 20 feet after his climbing rope slipped (NB: Assume belay slipped) and his partner was unable to regain control. Dispatchers from the Utah County Sheriff's office received a call reporting the accident at 9:00 a.m. Lone Peak Fire District Paramedics treated Roberts at the scene. The canyon was closed for several hours in order to bring in a helicopter to airlift him to L.D.S. Hospital in Salt Lake City. Police report that Roberts and his partner were both experienced climbers and were using appropriate equipment.

On July 14, a 25-year-old man was climbing next to a waterfall in Coal Pit Gulch in Little Cottonwood Canyon when one of the rocks he was using as a handhold pulled out. The man was free-soloing and fell into a very steep and treacherous area. He suffered facial lacerations and a possible broken ankle and was unable to move. The man's friend ran down the trail to get help and encountered a third person with a cell phone who notified rescue personnel. Several hours of highly technical rescue work were required to bring the victim out of the gulch.

On July 18, Patrick Desisto (19) was rescued after being stranded on a ledge for 19 hours near Bridal Veil Falls in Provo Canyon. A large boulder had fallen on his hands. Desisto suffered lacerations and broken bones in several fingers.

On August 11, a 50-year-old man was rappelling into Pine Creek Canyon from the north rim when he found that his rope did not reach to the canyon floor. When he attempted to stop his downward movement, he turned upside down and rappelled off the end of his rope, falling 15 feet to the canyon floor. EMS personnel and rescuers attended to him and raised him 100 feet to the rim. He sustained fractures to four ribs and his left femur.

On December 17, a highly experienced rock climber was killed after apparently falling 400 feet from a peak in Ogden Canyon. The body of Kenneth Gigi of Syracuse was recovered on the afternoon of the 18th following an extensive search and recovery effort. Gigi went climbing near Malan's Peak in Ogden on the December 17. He was due back at his home by 5:00 p.m. but never made it. About 9:00 p.m. his family called the Sheriff's office to report him missing. Search crews found two of Gigi's friends who were also looking for him, and they pointed searchers to the area Gigi frequented. At 11:00 p.m. a group consisting of Sheriff's searchers and friends spotted Gigi's body in a chute below the face of the peak. It appeared that he had slipped while climbing and had fallen or slid approximately 400 feet. Gigi was solo climbing with no gear or helmet, only a backpack. The best theory is that for whatever reason, he began climbing and was soon in a position

where the safest escape was to try to climb out of the canyon, followed by a slip on ice or snow.

Analysis

Not much can be said with so few details. The ones with obvious errors need no comment. An interesting conclusion to the man who rappelled off the end of his rope is that the leader of his five-person team was issued a citation for not having a canyoneering permit. Of greater concern should have been why no knot was tied in the end of the rope. (Source: Jed Williamson)

FALL ON ROCK—NOT ANCHORED AT TOP OF CLIFF, INEXPERIENCE

Utah, Big Cottonwood Canyon, Storm Mountain Amphitheater

On October 10, Amberly Rogers (20) fell at the Storm Mountain Amphitheater while attempting to set up a top-rope. She was on a buttress just west of the climb Big in Japan (12b). The area she was in is accessed by a short scramble from the west and has no established climbing routes on it. She was planning to set a top-rope on the buttress and was either about to throw the rope or was in the process of throwing the rope down to her climbing partners when she slipped. It is not known whether she had set her anchor yet, but if she had, then she did not clip in to it. No gear was left at the spot. She took about a 25-foot high-angle slide/tumble, followed by a 25-foot free-fall to the ground.

The area in which she fell is in the Storm Mountain Picnic Area. Paramedics from Salt Lake County Fire were able to reach her easily, and transported her by Air-med helicopter to the hospital. Amberly died from her injuries several days later.

Analysis

In an exposed spot, it's clearly better to rig a good anchor first and tie in to it before doing anything like throwing the rope where you might risk a fall. At the time of the accident, Amberly had been climbing only about a month. (Tom Moyer, Salt Lake County Sheriff's Search and Rescue)

(Editor's Note: Tom Moyer submitted a few other reports, involving a stranded climber who had thrown his rope down, loss of control on glissade, and a protection failure following a fall.)

RAPPEL FAILURE—MULTIPLE CAUSES

Washington, Frenchman's Coulee

Around 2:00 p.m. on March 7, Robert Peruchini (41) and his partner, Ms. Teri Martin (52), climbed the traditional basalt pillar route known as "Pumping the Pigeon" (5.8) on Sunshine Wall at Frenchman's Coulee, five miles east of Vantage. Peruchini led the climb; Martin seconded and cleaned the gear. They topped out and prepared a rappel from the chains on a pillar-top adjacent to the route. After passing the 10.5-mm, 220-foot-long Edelweiss rope through the fixed anchor chains, both climbers tossed a coil of rope