

failed, however, to thread both sides of his rope through the descender and locking carabiner, instead just securing one side in the device. So when he stood up and weighted the rope, it zipped through the quick-link and dropped him down the vertical face to a concrete sidewalk, which surrounds Red Twin Spire and neighboring White Twin Spire. The Colorado Springs Fire Department high-angle rescue team responded and evacuated the climber. (Source: About.com website - <http://climbing.about.com>)

## **RAPPELLING ERROR – UNEVEN ROPES, HASTE**

### **Colorado, Ouray Ice Park, New Frontier**

A climber rappelled off the end of his rope on February 17. He explained that he was in a rush. He set up an anchor, clipped the rope to the middle mark, threw the rope, started rappelling, and suddenly found himself falling/tumbling. He mistook the 15-foot mark for the middle mark of the rope. Luckily he was at New Frontier, so he only fell approximately 30 feet. Had it been elsewhere, the fall would have been much, much worse. He suffered only a broken ankle and wrist.

#### **Analysis**

A few tips to rappel safely: Know your rope's midpoint, tie bulky knots in both ends of the rope to jam in your rappel device; use a backup such as an autoblock, prusik, or kleimheist knot on the rope; clip to your harness with a locking carabiner, have your partner double-check all systems, and finally, visually check that the rope ends reach the next station or the ground before you rappel (Source: Edited from a report on [rockclimbing.com](http://rockclimbing.com) posted on 2/18/09)

## **FALL ON ROCK, ROPE PULLED THROUGH BELAY DEVICE**

### **Colorado, Clear Creek Canyon, Wall of the 90's**

On March 10, I (36) had successfully climbed the route Hot Stuff (5.10c). My two partners and I were climbing on a 70m rope, a standard length for this route. I was being lowered when the rope went through the belayer's device resulting in my dropping about 20 feet to the belay ledge. I then bounced off the ledge, fell an additional 20 feet, and tumbled farther down the scree. Injuries included a lacerated ear, abrasions, and a concussion.

*(Editor's Note: A cellphone was used to report the incident to rescue personnel.)*

#### **Analysis**

The simple solution for preventing this accident would have been to tie a knot in the end of the rope on the belayer's end. This is normally a common practice with our group if we have any concern that the route may exceed the length of our rope or if there is any concern of shortage. In this case, I had read information about the area and this route in particular looking for information prior to heading out. The information provided from other

climbers never stated that a 70m rope would not be long enough for the route. It's a popular, 3½ star route, so I would have thought if there were any descending issues that they would be noted. Having said that, the length of the route should have given me the information I needed. The route itself is 130 feet long, thus requiring 260 feet of rope. My 70m only measures 230 feet. Even with rope stretch, it still isn't long enough. Unfortunately, I didn't pay attention to route length before heading out. From now on, knots will always be placed in rope ends and route length will always be on the top of my mind. (Source: Edited from a report by Chad Mauer, Castle Rock, CO)

## **FALL OR SLIP ON ICE, INADEQUATE PROTECTION – RUNNING ROPE THREADED THROUGH WEBBING, WEBBING FAILED**

### **Colorado, Vail, Rigid Designator**

Late on the morning of March 21, Christopher Boratenski (31) an experienced climber, was climbing the Rigid Designator (WI5) a single pitch, 115-foot ice climb with two companions when he fell.

His climbing partners Oscar and Charlotte Fors had climbed the route the day before and used an existing tree-anchor at the top of the climb. After leading the climb, Oscar backed up the existing anchor, a steel carabiner in red 1/2-inch webbing backed up by a sling of black 1/2-inch webbing, with a 5mm spectra cord. Oscar rappelled down on double rope and Charlotte followed the climb on top-rope using the steel carabiner with the two back ups as anchor.

On the day of the accident, Chris led the route and used the existing anchor at the top of the climb, but failed to include the steel carabiner, leaving the rope threaded through the black 1/2-inch sling and the 5mm spectra cord. He rappelled off on a double rope (2 x 60m, 9.8mm ropes). Charlotte climbed using one of the ropes as top-rope. After approximately 80 feet of climbing, the angle decreases leading up an additional 20 feet to the anchor. Charlotte stopped climbing at this point and was lowered to the ground. Oscar tied in and climbed to the same point where Charlotte stopped and was lowered to the ground. Chris tied in and climbed again. As Charlotte belayed, she noticed a slight "stickiness" in the rope, but considering ~150 feet of rope is out and the rope seemed to be moving well, she continued to take.

Choosing the partly overhanging right side of the fall, Chris hung on the rope to rest twice on his ascent. He topped out at the same height as the previous climbers and was lowered a few feet before the anchor failed, causing him to fall straight to the ground not touching the icefall on the descent. He landed flat on his back approximately 20 feet below the belay stance, then bounced off the ice pyramid at the base of the ice-fall coming to rest an additional 15 feet farther down. He regained consciousness after