

using a standard-length rope, I would have been able to escape the belay and rappel to Tom on the unused portion of the rope. What caused Tom to fall on 5.5/5.6 terrain? I don't know. Maybe Tom doesn't either or will not remember, but a slip is the most probably answer. I didn't see any rock fall with him and it is unlikely that a hold broke." (Source: Steve Muehlhauser, Park Ranger, Eldorado Canyon State Park, and Bill Wright, from a post on www.mountainproject.com)

FALL ON ROCK, ROPE SEVERED

Colorado, Eldorado Canyon State Park, Red Garden Wall

Joe Miller (38) fell to his death on the morning of June 22 while climbing the Yellow Spur route (5.9) on the Redgarden Wall. A later investigation revealed that a micro-Camalot below the dihedral held. It appears that the length of sling on that cam caused the rope to run over a particularly sharp edge, severing the fairly new 60-meter, 9.8-mm rope resulting in a fall of seventy feet to the ground for Miller.

Analysis

An investigation by the Rocky Mountain Rescue Group found no problem with the rope, but did look into the angles of the rope, etc. See their full analysis at <http://www.rockymountainrescue.org>. Lead climbers are encouraged to inspect the immediate area before placing gear. Check for sharp edges, loose rock, expanding flakes, etc., and react accordingly. (Source: Jed Williamson and Steve Muehlhauser, Park Ranger, Eldorado Canyon State Park)

RAPPEL ERROR – NO BACK-UP BELAY AND NO KNOT ON ROPE END

Colorado, Boulder Canyon

On July 6, a female (31) fell approximately 15 feet when she rappelled off the end of her rope while climbing in Boulder Canyon. She injured her lower leg, and possibly her back, and had to be transported across Boulder Creek and taken to Boulder Community Hospital.

Analysis

It is common practice to tie a blocking knot on the free end of the rope as a rappel safeguard. (Source: www.dailycamera.com/news)

FALL ON ROCK

Colorado, Rocky Mountain National Park, Longs Peak

On July 17, my partner Eric Baer (23) and I (William Esposito, 27) began climbing the Stettner's Ledges Route (5.7+) on the east face of Longs Peak. On approximately the fourth pitch, I climbed about ten feet past my last gear placement, a green Camalot, and as I attempted a technical climbing maneuver I lost my grip on the rock and fell. I shouted, "Falling," and fell past my cam placement about ten feet. The Camalot held and the rope

caught me, but the approximately two feet of rope stretch caused both of my feet to smash onto a ledge of rock. I quickly shouted down to Eric that I was OK; however, after about thirty seconds of rest, I realized both of my feet had been severely damaged (small fracture in talus bone of left foot, severe soft tissue damage in both).

Eric carefully lowered me to the belay ledge he was on. From there, he used existing anchors as well as our own equipment to lower me first, then himself back down three pitches to the Mills Glacier. He then used the rope to control my slide down the glacier to a flat rock. Eric made sure I had adequate food, water, and clothing and then went for help.

Eric returned about an hour later with another climber with first responder training who had sent his partner down for help. Two additional climbing parties of two each came down from climbing routes on the Diamond. One of them had a cell phone that worked and called for rescue. About an hour later, two climbing rescue rangers arrived. One arranged for a helicopter while the other performed a medical examination on me. I was then laid into a stretcher and carried by the rangers and other climbers (eight people) 200 yards across snow and rock to the helicopter landing spot. The helicopter arrived approximately one hour from the time the rangers arrived. I was taken to the Boulder Community Hospital, treated for my injuries and released the same evening.

Analysis

Although everything worked just as it should, I should have been more aware of my fall line at all times. Because I climbed ten feet past my last gear placement, I should have considered the ledge ten feet below it and perhaps placed more gear before continuing. This incident reinforces the importance of having the skills and knowledge to initiate self-rescue. (Source: William Esposito)

FALL ON ROCK, ROCK and MUD SLIDES

Colorado, Crestone Needle

Duane (57) and Linda Buhrmester (56), both experienced climbers, walked in from the trailhead to Upper Colony Lake on July 26 in the mid afternoon. They camped there for the night with the intent on climbing the Ellingwood Arête (5.7+) on Crestone Needle (14,197 feet).

Investigators suggested that a severe storm washed the couple off the mountain, causing them to fall about 500 feet into a mudslide area. Rescuers found the couple buried in rocks and mud. We believe this is what happened because they weren't roped together when found (Linda had a mountaineer's coil over her shoulder and had both ends of the rope, suggesting they had used the rope earlier and had it at the ready should they need it again). If they were in that chute with that much scree, they knew that it would have