

FALL ON ROCK, PLACING PROTECTION

New York, Shawangunks

In November 1981, a young woman (18) fell while trying to clip in to a fixed piton on Try Again (5.10). (Source: Brad Snyder)

Analysis

Twelve of the 14 accidents in the Shawangunks this year were leader falls. These last two illustrate what can happen when a climber's focus shifts from the most important concern to a secondary function. (Source: J. Williamson)

FALL ON ROCK, FAILURE OF RAPPELLER, CLIMBING UNROPED

North Carolina, Crowders Mountain

In April 1981, a person was rappelling from Crowders Mountain when he knocked off an unroped climber. (Source: T. C. P. Zimmermann)

Analysis

While there are no further details on this accident, I will quote Zimmermann's general comment in a letter to me, "It seems to me that the incident holds various lessons." (Source: J. Williamson)

FALL ON SNOW, BAD WEATHER

Oregon, Mount Hood

At 2:30 a.m. on Sunday, June 21, a group from the Mazamas gathered at the Cloud Cap Inn on the northeast side of Mount Hood and began a trek toward the summit via the Cooper Spur route.

As the group was descending from the top, ten of the 16 climbers who reached the summit suffered a fall of up to 2,000 feet from the chimney to Eliot Glacier. Five climbers were killed and five others injured.

Jack Bohl (29) of Portland, one of the climbers who fell, described the scene in a nutshell: "We were going up the Cooper Spur route and we had gone up to the summit. The weather wasn't bad when we started, but when we reached the summit about 11 a.m., the weather had deteriorated. It was windy and wet. We were going back down when one of our rope teams slipped. They went sliding uncontrollably through a narrow and steep chute, knocking down seven others and everybody wound up sliding down together. We slid under the Eliot Glacier and came to a stop."

No one knows exactly what caused the accident; apparently someone lost his footing. Bohl indicated that the weather could have caused the climbers to rush a bit and that that may have been a factor. "We were concerned about getting down because everyone was getting cold and wet and it was getting late," he said.

After the fall, the six climbers who did not get tangled up in the human avalanche worked their way down the mountain. According to Sheriff Lynch, three of them went to Cloud Cap Inn for help and the others headed for Eliot Glacier to aid the victims. Meanwhile, John Goss (20) was digging himself out of trouble and trying to help the others do the same.

According to Bohl, those who fell first—the leaders of the climb—suffered the worst