

tured and displaced the calcaneus, requiring surgical reduction. (Source: Roy Curet, 25)

Analysis

If I had used more slings under the overhand, the amount of drag would not have been so high that Bil would have thought it necessary to remove the protection. If Bil had not removed the protection, Ron would have stayed on the easier rock of the normal route. If Ron had followed his own thoughts/instincts, he would not have attempted the inadequately protected pitch (at least not so early in the season). (Source: Roy Curet)

FALL ON ROCK, EXCEEDING ABILITIES, INADEQUATE PROTECTION

New York, Harriman State Park

On June 1, 1985, I was on the first pitch of a climb whose name and rating I do not know. I was about three meters from my last piece of protection on a hard traverse of a flaring crack under an overhang which I had not been able to get any protection into. I thought about turning back, but decided to continue around a corner to where it looked like I would be able to get something in. I couldn't. I then tried to reach a fixed pin farther to the right but my fingers gave out and I fell. I fell onto a ledge. I also struck my back on a rock and got scraped up in the fall. I was lowered/downclimbed the remaining distance to the ground. The distance from the protection and the distance to the ledge were such that no strain had come onto the belay. I later jumared the pitch to recover the pieces I did have in and the next day hiked out with a full pack. Persistent pain brought me to an Emergency Room where I learned I had fractured two vertebrae. (Source: Roy Curet, 25)

Analysis

If I hadn't worn a helmet, my injuries would have been much worse. If I had used a chest harness, I would not have been falling head first. I should not have risked the fall without some kind of protection on the traverse. (Source: Roy Curet)

SNAKE BITE

New York, Shawangunks

On July 6, 1985, a man (27) was leading Black Fly (5.5) when he was bitten by a copperhead snake. He did not fall. (Source: Tom Scheuer, Senior Ranger, Mohonk Preserve)

(Editor's Note: This is one of the few instances where a victim of snake bite did not fall or jump. A good decision.)

FALL ON ROCK, DARKNESS

New York, Shawangunks

On October 20, 1985, a man (35) had finished climbing late in the evening. He unroped and was going to relieve himself when he took a fatal fall to the ground from the top of Skytop Cliff. (Source: Tom Scheuer, Senior Ranger, Mohonk Preserve)

FALL ON ICE, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT

Oregon, Mount Hood

On May 19, 1985, Stan Meeuwssen (30), Michael Cenedella (34) and Kurt Cornick (19)

were climbing Mt. Hood's Castle Crag route. They reached the arete at the top of the Crag by 0700. The arete consisted of solid, exposed gendarmes with very loose gullies intervening. The guidebook hadn't prepared us for Class 5 climbing. It reads, "Follow the ridge to the summit, staying on rock most of the way." We had only one 50 meter rope and a few slings and 'biners. The terrain, party size and short leads made for very slow travel. At 1000, a point was reached at which a choice existed: a 25 meter rappel to class 2 rock and snow below, or about 50 meters of the arete which gives easy access to the snow. The decision was made by Meeuwssen and Cenedella to rappel, in view of slow travel and likely deteriorating snow conditions.

After Meeuwssen and Cornick rappelled, Meeuwssen dropped his helmet, which rolled a considerable distance toward Illumination Saddle. A climber below, ignoring shouts from above, attempted to steal the helmet. Meeuwssen and Cornick were by this time on the snow, and Cenedella had just finished his rappel and was dealing with a stuck rope. Meeuwssen asked if Cenedella felt safe enough for Meeuwssen to glissade after Cornick to try to save his helmet. Cenedella, the most experienced climber in the party, said that he did. Meeuwssen glissaded toward Illumination Saddle.

Cenedella climbed the loose rock a bit, retrieved the rope and moved very carefully to the snow. He is familiar with the dangers of moats and soft snow and had mentioned them to others in the party. Nevertheless, despite careful ice ax probing, he fell backwards after only two steps on the snow, apparently because of a moat. He tumbled uncontrollably 100 vertical meters, attempting three self-arrests, only to have the ax torn from his grasp each time. Unlike many reports of many such falls, Cenedella had no disorientation; he was always painfully aware of which was down.

After swinging his legs downhill when he was going slower, Cenedella stopped and determined he'd injured his right shoulder. He shouted to his companions, who helped him to the saddle. A doctor who happened to ski by administered Percodan and descended to the ski lift to alert the ski patrol. Cenedella was able to walk about halfway to the top of the lift when the pills began to make him unsteady. Cornick descended to the ski patrol, who evacuated Cenedella to Timberline Lodge.

The emergency room doctor had some difficulty diagnosing Cenedella's injury as a rare posterior shoulder dislocation. (Source: Michael Cenedella)

Analysis

The party was too large (by one) and inadequately equipped. The problem was in an over-reliance on a guidebook; a few inquiries with people who had done the route could have eliminated the problems which led to the accident.

Deteriorating snow conditions made gaining the snow an attractive alternative and led to the crucial decision to rappel. The decision was rational, but had unfortunate consequences.

I have 12 years of climbing experience, Meeuwssen has eight years, and while this was Cornick's first alpine climb, he had practiced basic techniques and did well. He's about the only beginner I would have considered for a trip of this nature. (Source: Michael Cenedella)

FALL ON ROCK, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT, OVER-CONFIDENT Oregon, Mount Hood

Around 0545 in June 1985, David Thomas (32) and Doug Sahlberg (27) were ascending Mt. Hood when Sahlberg lost his footing. The following is part of the account he wrote concerning the accident.