

(Editor's Note: Our thanks to Rangers Dan Miskinis and William Otto for keeping us informed on climbing activities in the area, a very popular climbing place, which attracts both the competent and neophyte.)

FALL ON ROCK, INADEQUATE BELAY, PROTECTION PULLED OUT

Wyoming, Tetons

On June 24, 1988, at 1600, Matthew Lash (23) and Christopher Harder (26) were climbing a route called "Caveat Emptor" on Cathedral Rock. Harder led, completing the third pitch of the climb and establishing an overhead belay for Lash on a small ledge. Harder clipped into two fixed pitons located at the level of his feet. He also placed two stoppers behind a small chockstone in a crack located at the level of his shoulder. He clipped directly into these stoppers via a sling to his harness. Harder started belaying Lash up using a Bachle belay plate attached to his harness.

Lash climbed up five to six meters from a ledge at the end of the second pitch. The climbing was difficult and he fell. When the weight of Lash's body came onto Harder at the belay, Harder was pulled forward. Both of Harder's stoppers pulled out, and Harder started to pitch forward. He instinctively reached out with his arms to brace himself, and in so doing, let go of the belay rope. Harder was pulled off his belay stance, but was then stopped by the sling connecting him to the two fixed pins. Harder tried to regrip the rope, which was slipping freely through the belay plate, but sustained third degree burns to his hands.

Lash fell the five to six meters back onto his starting ledge, landing on his feet. Striking the ledge took most of the energy out of Lash's fall. He rolled off the ledge, but Harder was able to regain control of the rope and stop any further fall. Lash was then able to climb back onto the ledge. Harder rappelled down to a point where he could see and check on Lash. Once Lash was secured on his ledge, Harder rappelled all the way down to him. Since they only had one rope with them, further unaided descent was not possible.

Harder was aware of two other climbers in the area, Olson and Quinlan, who were climbing "The Snaz" route just to the east of Caveat. Harder traversed around a corner to contact the other climbers. With the aid of Quinlan and Olson, Harder was able to get Lash over to "The Snaz" route. The three climbers then assisted Lash in rappelling down two pitches to a large ledge near the base of the cliff. They all descended afterwards. Olson and Quinlan then ran out to report the accident, arriving at park headquarters at 1900. The rescue team reached the Death Canyon trail at 0130. A trail wheel was then used to move Lash to the west side of Phelps Lake, arriving there at 0400. Dick Long from the JY transported the patient and rescue team across the lake. Lash was then transported by Medic 1 to St. John's Hospital in Jackson, arriving there at 0450. All personnel clear at 0630. Lash sustained a fractured right heel and a severely sprained ankle. (Source: Peter Armington, Ranger, Grand Teton National Park)

FALLING ROCK, FALL ON ROCK, NO HARD HAT

Wyoming, Tetons

On July 3, 1988, at 1000 Carl Detwyler (36) and Steve Glenn were climbing the route Armed Robbery on Cloudveil Dome. Detwyler was leading the third pitch when the