

that the victim was not following normal precautions. Another factor that adds to the latter is that he was not wearing a helmet. Third, the system of top-roping he chose was not ordinary. A friend of both the victim and his partner wrote a letter in which she indicated that John High was both knowledgeable and careless. We would agree with her further observation that "careless accidents seem to happen far more frequently to very experienced climbers," and that, "Confidence [can be] dangerous.")

DISLOCATED KNEE—FALL ON ROCK, MISCOMMUNICATION

New Hampshire, Cathedral Ledge

On July 3, 1992, Mark Chauvin was guiding on Standard and had gone about 35 feet up the Toe Crack to a belay ledge when his first student, who was doing the crux layback move, experienced a dislocated knee and fell as a result. Chauvin did a counter balanced rappel with the student on his back to bring them to the ground. MRS members carried the victim to an ambulance.

Analysis

The student had dislocated his knee before this time. He did not communicate this fact to the guide or to other students. Even though he thought the problem had been corrected, he should have told the guide, and perhaps even have considered wearing an appropriate knee brace. (Source: George Hurley)

FALL ON WET ROCK, NO HARD HAT

New Hampshire, Whitehorse Ledge

On August 2, 1992, Steve Wickham (32) was about 600 feet up on "Wedge" when he fell. His rope was clipped through about six pieces of gear, with the final one being a 1 1/2 Friend which caught his fall of about 50 feet. He was upside down and bleeding profusely, and he was unconscious. The male partner, with a belay from the female, climbed to Steve and righted him. Steve regained consciousness after being out for about seven to ten minutes. He suffered a wound on top of his head, a fractured skull with the break running half way around his head, and two compressed vertebrae.

The accident happened around 1505. The litter-lower rescue by the MRS and other climbers was completed by 1800. Members of SOLO and the North Conway Fire Department Rescue Squad were at the base to carry Steve to the ambulance. Because of the severity of his skull fracture, he was flown from the North Conway Hospital to the Hitchcock Center near Hanover.

Analysis

The victim was not wearing a hard hat. He and his partners had decided that Whitehorse Ledge is a clean cliff, and therefore left helmets in the car. (Source: George Hurley)

FALL ON ROCK, INADEQUATE PROTECTION

New Hampshire, Cathedral Ledge

On October 4, I was climbing at Cathedral Ledge with a friend. We were doing a four pitch 5.9 route called Diedre, and despite the sun, we were on the north side on a cool (but blue) Fall day, which made finger warmth marginal. I was leading the top pitch, a