

Dan and Curt were found guilty of disorderly conduct (creating a hazardous condition for themselves and others) 36CFR 2.34 (a) (4), and ordered by the court to pay \$500 each to the park's rescue fund.

FALL ON ROCK, HASTE—TRYING TO STICK TO A SCHEDULE

California, Yosemite Valley, North Dome Gulley

On July 6, Dave Bedell (34) and Matt Niswonger finished climbing the South Face of Washington Column and bivouacked on the summit. Early the next morning they headed for North Dome Gulley. Bedell had descended this way previously, staying close to the Column and making several rappels. They were late for a meeting this morning so, after a couple of rappels, they decided to walk further east along a ledge system in hopes it would be faster.

They soon came to a steep, smooth, granite water course several feet wide. Niswonger climbed up 100 feet or so to a less precarious crossing. Only thin streaks of water coated the rock, so Bedell figured he could cross right where he was, without a rope, by stepping in the dry spots.

Somehow he slipped, went down, and started sliding. After about 100 feet, he went over a 15-20 foot drop and landed on his butt in a shallow depression that stopped his fall. He had tried to lead with his feet the whole way, but he was nevertheless knocked out when he hit. He regained consciousness about ten minutes later, just as Niswonger reached him. Sharp pains ran down his back and legs. His legs tingled, and it hurt to breathe.

Niswonger found his way down to the phone at Mirror Lake and contacted the Park Service at 0900. Two rangers helirappelled to the scene at about 1000, and a ground team arrived shortly thereafter. They immobilized Bedell in a vacuum body splint, gave him oxygen, and shorthauled him under the park helicopter to the Yosemite Clinic. He was then flown by AirMed to Doctor's Medical Center in Modesto, where he was diagnosed with compression fractures of vertebrae L1 and T12, as well as fractures of the right 11th and 12th ribs and several deep bruises. He has made a full recovery.

Analysis

Although you can go a number of ways, the common route down North Dome Gulley follows a trail (make that a goat path) that traverses fairly high—but below the rim—and crosses the water course well above where Bedell fell. In dry conditions no rope work is necessary.

It is interesting to note that several years ago, another climber died at the same spot trying to cross the water course at night by matchlight. (Source: Cam Sholly, John Dill, NPS Rangers)

FALL ON ROCK, EXCEEDING ABILITIES

California, Yosemite Valley, Nutcracker

On July 1, Paul Bennett (41) and Randy Kanta were climbing the Nutcracker, 5.8, on Manure Pile Buttress. Bennett led the last pitch; he climbed the low-angle slab off the belay, placed a nut in the steep corner, then climbed to the mantle, where he fell.

His protection held, but he struck the slab ten feet below feet first. The moment he hit he felt his ankle go. He tumbled over, stopped upside down, and when he looked up he saw that his ankle was bent 90° to the side.