

I checked with the Utah Valley Regional Medical Center the following morning, and Scott was listed in stable condition with internal injuries. (Source: Chris Reed, SAR Team)

FALL ON ROCK

Utah, Diamond Fork

On May 8, we were paged out at 1730 for a fall victim, still hanging from his rope, in Diamond Fork Canyon.

When I arrived on scene the boy (victim) was sitting in a car. Dick asked me to check him out, but the boy did not want any medical attention. He had been up walking around prior to deputies arriving on the scene.

The boy's father requested that he be transported by ambulance to the hospital to be evaluated. Dick asked me to check his injuries. I put a cervical collar on him. He had a laceration to the top of his head, but no other obvious injuries. He was aware of time and place, and I had difficulty in convincing him to stop moving his neck and back. He just kept moving his neck, twisting and reaching over to the other side of the car, after I told him numerous times to stop moving his head and back.

His companions, a guy and two girls, were quite concerned about his well being and one of the girls was quite emotional. She had run down the road to Little Diamond when she was unable to start the injured boy's car.

I talked to the boy who was teaching them to rappel. He said that he was on belay as well as on the rappelling line. That was fortunate. The injured boy had not yet started rappelling when he lost his balance and tumbled over the edge. Since he was on belay, he did not fall very far, but he pendulumed and struck his head. His companions said he lost consciousness and was hanging limp in his seat harness. They said he even had some seizure activity. The one girl ran for help while the others lowered the injured boy to the ground. He regained consciousness and was able to walk down to the road and their car.

Spanish Fork Ambulance transported him to Mountain View Hospital. (Source: Chris Reed, SAR Team)

FALL ON ROCK, FATIGUE, MISCOMMUNICATION

Washington, Icicle Creek, Eight Mile Buttress

On Sunday, April 16, Andy Tanning was participating in a rock climbing field trip as a student in the Seattle Mountaineers Intermediate Climbing Course. He was ascending the Tree Route on Eight Mile Buttress. This is a popular multi-pitch route which has been used by climbers for decades and is rated 5.6 or 5.7. The first pitch of the route may be started on the left as a chimney rated 5.6 or 5.5 or may be started on the right at a steep crack rated 5.7. Sam LeBarron was Andy's instructor and was belaying him at the time of the fall. Three other students and one instructor were ahead of Andy and Sam on the route. Two of these had completed the first pitch, and the second rope team was on the pitch, followed by Andy, who was leading.

The climber who was climbing just ahead of Andy was having difficulty because he was wearing a heavy pack which seemed to be pulling him over backward and made it difficult for him to complete some of the harder moves. Andy, now on the route, waited behind this climber while he worked to overcome the difficulty.

In the meantime, two other climbers who were not in the course arrived at the base of the route, accompanied by their two dogs. Another instructor, Vera Dewey, was also

at the base of the route, observing.

The climber ahead of Andy gave up on the 5.7 crack and moved to the easier chimney. At this point, Andy had been waiting 15 to 30 minutes at a resting point. He then started up the crack. He had difficulty at the crux of the crack, and spent longer than he felt he should getting through the move. As a result, he grew tired and felt that he should either down-climb to the resting point or hang from the rope to rest. Andy decided to use his remaining strength to add a piece of protection and then hang his weight on the rope to rest and shake out his tired arms prior to continuing the climb.

After adding the piece of protection, Andy felt that his strength was almost gone, so he called, "Falling," three times, waiting approximately five seconds between each call. He did not call out his belayer's name in conjunction with yelling, "Falling." Vera, who could see Andy, heard a call of "Falling" and directed Sam to "take up the slack." Sam immediately began to take in some rope. At that time, Andy "released from the rock" for a short rest. The remaining slack in the system, together with normal rope stretch was sufficient to allow Andy to fall approximately ten to twelve feet onto a shelf before the rope grew taut enough to stop his fall. All of his protection held securely. Sam was not pulled tight against his anchor, and no rope slipped through his belay device.

Sam lowered Andy to a safe place. Andy had swelling in his right ankle, which was subsequently bandaged by Vera. Andy decided he could walk to the trailhead with assistance. He then drove to Seattle on his own where he was diagnosed with a fractured fifth metatarsal in several places, a hairline fracture of the ankle and a small chip to the outside ankle.

Analysis

Several factors may have contributed to his accident, but predominately, it was one of poor communication between climber and belayer. Calling the belayer's name along with, "Falling," might have helped reestablish communication. Also, Andy might have avoided the fall if he tested the system before committing his weight to it, or clipped directly into his protection. (Source: From a report written by a panel of five members of the Seattle Mountaineers and written statements from party members)

FALL ON ROCK, LOOSE ROCK

Washington, Tumwater Buttress

On Sunday, April 26, Linda Olson was participating in a rock climbing field trip as a student in the Seattle Mountaineers Intermediate Climbing Course. She was leading the second pitch of Tumwater Buttress. Linda climbed to the top of a short pillar and reached the crux of the climb, which was a bulge formed by several large flakes of rock. She placed a wired stopper while standing on top of the pillar then proceeded to work her way up the flakes. She suddenly yelled and was falling, with a large rock falling with her. She fell past her belayer. After she landed, the large flake struck her leg and then her arm. The fall was estimated to be around 25 feet. Her belayer (John Wick) and another rope team provided first aid. Linda sustained a broken arm and broken leg.

Analysis

The wired stopper pulled out during the fall, but it is unclear whether this made a difference in the outcome. Linda was wearing a helmet, without which her injuries would have been much more serious. (Source: From a report written by a panel of five members of the Seattle Mountaineers and written statements from party members)