

park on this and one previous trip.

Craig's belayer might have shortened his fall by taking in slack, but he had no time to do so. Craig feels he should have placed protection a few feet before (lower than) the piece that failed. He could see the crack there and could have placed a reliable piece that would have kept him off the ground. (Source: John Dill, SAR Ranger, Yosemite National Park)

FALL ON ROCK, INADEQUATE BELAY—ROPE TOO SHORT and NO KNOT IN END

California, Yosemite National Park, Guppy Dome

On September 7, Scott Davidson (54) led a short pitch, fixed an anchor and had his belayer lower him (with an ATC). The rope (50m) was too short for the task and there was no safety knot in the end. The end of the rope ran through the ATC and Davidson fell 15 feet to a ledge, then 30 feet on a slab, spraining his ankle. (Source: John Dill and Martin Ziebell, SAR Rangers, Yosemite National Park)

(Editor's Note: One of many incidents of this kind for the year. By the end of this book, the reader will wonder if some kind of short rope, no knots, etc., epidemic struck the climbing scene this year.)

FALL ON ROCK, INADEQUATE PROTECTION—PULLED OUT

California, Yosemite Valley, El Capitan

On September 13 around 1720, Kris Alageswaram (age unknown) was leading pitch number 26 on the Nose Route of El Capitan. At a height of 15 to 20 feet above the belay ledge, Kris placed a piece of protection for an aid move. While putting weight on the gear placement, the piece pulled out, and Kris fell about 15 to 20 feet hitting a sloping ledge with his leg. Kris continued to fall an additional 15 to 20 feet before the rope stopped his fall. His partner, David Reynolds, assisted Kris back to the belay ledge and they started yelling for help.

On September 14 Martin Ziebell was lowered approximately 800 feet to the injured climber. After stabilizing the open ankle fracture, he and the victim were raised to the summit. The victim was then carried approximately a quarter mile to a landing zone and flown to Crane Flat Heli-base to rendezvous with an air ambulance. The victim was then flown to Doctor's Medical Center in Modesto. Meanwhile, SAR team member Dean Potter was lowered to "Camp 5" to extract the victim's partner. Both were raised safely to the summit of El Capitan. All rescue personnel and equipment were then flown to CFH and transported by ground vehicle to the Valley SAR cache by 1800.

Analysis

Reynolds feels that the fall was caused by "bad gear placement."

Reynolds stated that he had been climbing for 15 years and that Kris had been climbing for 18 years. This was the fourth "Big Wall" in Yosemite that Reynolds and Alageswaram had climbed together. The other routes included "The Prow," and three years ago the two had climbed "The Regular North-