

have been twice measured on the Longs Peak summit at 220 mph. It should also be mentioned that Dreher was wearing a 70-pound pack when picked up by the wind! Dreher and Williamson showed good judgment in aborting their summit attempt in these conditions. (Source: Jim Detterline and Mark Magnuson, NPS Rangers, RMNP)

## **FALL ON ROCK, NO HARD HAT, EXCEEDING ABILITIES**

### **Colorado, Boulder Canyon, Happy Hour Crag**

On February 26, while lead climbing in Boulder Canyon with two relatively inexperienced members in my group, I lent my helmet to Rob, the least experienced person in our group (who had never climbed outdoors before). Darin, our most experienced climber, was climbing a 5.8-5.9 buttress immediately west of our established position, while being belayed by Dave (who had a great deal of experience in the gym, but likewise had never been outdoors before). Lance belayed me on a route that looked like it might have been 5.6-soft 5.7. Rob was going to top-rope the route. For the first 80 feet of the route, I placed pro approximately every 10 to 15 feet. The route arced from left to right. My final pro placement was a threaded sling through a pothole, from which I had a 30-foot traverse to the natural anchor. Within 10 feet of the anchor, I slipped and fell about 25-30 feet, hitting the top of my head on the rock face. Lance made a sure-handed catch, but I had lacerated my scalp. The copious blood flow impressed upon me the necessity of being examined by a medical professional. Lance accompanied me during the short down-climb/rappel and drove me to the Boulder Community Hospital, where I received seven stitches to close the laceration on my scalp.

### **Analysis**

I clearly should have worn my helmet, especially while on lead. My reason for leaving my helmet with Rob (so he might climb with a greater feeling of security) demonstrates that I began the climb without a clear idea of whether the second was going to follow me up to the natural anchor, from which we would continue up, or if he was merely going to top-rope. I had obviously underestimated the difficulty of the route and/or overestimated my own ability. Further, the arcing route I took made the problem of rope drag a factor, which may or may not have contributed to me falling in the first place.

You can be certain that I will never again climb, let alone lead, without wearing my helmet. (Source: Jon Canon - 28)

## **FALL ON ROCK, INADEQUATE TIE-IN FOR LOWERING, NO HARD HAT**

### **Colorado, Clear Creek Canyon, Cat Slab**

On April 24, Heather Lower (25) died in Clear Creek Canyon. She was climbing west of Tunnel 5. (A few areas there include: Cat Slab, Dog House, Primo Wall, and Crystal Tower.) She was with eight others. She fell 100-125 feet. She was not wearing a helmet. She was pronounced dead at the scene.

### **Analysis**

She was at Cat Slab, a new 5.4-5.10 bolted slab where folks often anchor themselves and thread the anchors to lower/rap. She was about to be lowered and

apparently unclipped the wrong figure-8 on a bight loop from her harness and then failed to check that she was indeed on belay to be lowered off using a sling-shot belay. Tying in directly to the harness avoids this kind of problem. (Source: Leo Paik and Bill May)

*(Editor's Note: There was another fatality at this area earlier in the year. The little information we have suggests that, as in the above case, the climber was being lowered and the system didn't work, because he dropped 60 feet. Unfortunately, lowering incidents like this are on the increase. See the next one!)*

## **FALL ON ROCK, INADEQUATE ANCHOR ON TOP ROPE SET UP**

### **Colorado, Boulder Canyon, Happy Hour Crag**

On April 20, a climber fell to his death while being lowered, due to the webbing on one of the anchor's parting and not being properly clipped in to the equalizing anchor. In the case of the webbing, it was only masking tape that connected (and hid!) the ends of one of two webbing anchor slings. This accident was particularly noteworthy because the climber had purchased the webbing the day before and did not realize that masking tape joined two pieces of webbing. The webbing came off the spool that did not have one continuous length. (Source: Bill May)

*(Editor's Note: This kind of mistake has only been reported once before to ANAM—many years ago. It is—or should be—fairly common knowledge that webbing, unlike rope, comes packaged in this manner.)*

## **SNOW BLINDNESS—INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT**

### **Colorado, Rocky Mountain National Park, Longs Peak**

On June 11, Michael William Pope (45) lost his sight while descending from a successful off-season ascent of the Keyhole Route on Longs Peak. It was a particularly bright and sunny day on the snow-covered route, but Pope had forgotten to pack his sunglasses. His eyes began to burn with intense pain, and he could not see farther than 10 feet. What he could see was blurred with a milky haze to it. Pope called for assistance through his family band radio. Park rangers responded and assisted him to the trailhead.

#### **Analysis**

Losing one's sight on a mountain can result in additional accidents! Remember your sunglasses or turn around before the damage to your eyes becomes severe. In an emergency, one can manufacture an improvised pair of sunglasses from cardboard and/or tape with just small slits for viewing. (Source: Jim Dettlerline and Mark Magnuson, NPS Rangers, RMNP)

## **FALL OR SLIP ON ROCK—TWO INCIDENTS**

### **Colorado, Black Canyon of the Gunnison**

On June 17, Zach Alberts (20) fell while leading a climb of the 5.10+ Cruise route. Alberts was climbing about 10 feet above his last piece of protection when he lost his footing, slipped and fell, sustaining possible fractures to both ankles. Alberts' climbing partner contacted North Rim Ranger Ed Delmolino at 9:30 p.m. Delmolino treated Alberts' injuries and monitored his condition