

to exercise and repeated every 15 or 20 minutes. Drinking a half can of soda for an entire day of climbing is clearly inadequate.

This rescue effort required over 140 hours of volunteer labor (26 people x 5.5 hours)! This is why climbers should familiarize themselves with basic partner and self-rescue skills in order to facilitate their own rescue. (Source: Aram Attarian)

FALL ON ICE, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT—DULL CRAMPONS

Oregon, Mount Hood, South Side

On March 23, two climbers (both 22) were descending the South Side standard route on Mount Hood. One of the climbers lost his footing at the “Pearly Gates” (roughly 11,000 feet) and took a tumbling fall down the Hogs Back, coming to rest near the Devils Kitchen (10,300 feet). Injuries included various abrasions and a severely sprained ankle. Both climbers appeared to be responsible individuals and were both certified Wilderness First Responders able to assess and treat the injuries at hand.

Given the icy conditions and rapidly decreasing visibility, a call was placed to Timberline Lodge ski patrol to inform them of the accident. Both climbers were fairly self-sufficient and intended to attempt a self-improvised rescue. Coincidentally two members of Portland Mountain Rescue (PMR) were in the immediate area and were informed of the injured climber by another party on the mountain. Due to the steep icy conditions and limited visibility, the climbers requested assistance with the evacuation from the PMR members.

Starting at the Hogs Back, the patient was lowered several pitches to the 9400 foot level near Triangle Moraine. At this point the terrain angle eased off enough to allow the patient to hobble off the mountain using ski poles with self-arrest grips as an improvised crutch. Two rescuers followed the patient using short tag lines as a belay. Once arriving at the top of the Palmer lift (8500 feet), a snow cat was able to provide transportation back to Timberline Lodge.

Analysis

Upon arriving at Timberline Lodge, the patient’s crampons were inspected. The crampons were rented from an outdoor store and the points were very dull. It is conceivable that the dull crampon points were not sharp enough to bite in to the ice encountered at the Pearly Gates—and possibly contributed to the uncontrolled fall. Whenever renting mountaineering equipment, it is a good idea to thoroughly inspect the equipment and verify that it is in adequate shape for the conditions you think you may encounter.

Depending on the comfort level of the climbers, the use of a running belay may have been warranted considering the icy conditions on the steep slope. The use of a running belay certainly could have minimized the extent of the fall.

There are two additional worthwhile comments. First, when considering a possible self-rescue, it is important to be certain you are familiar with the terrain and any possible difficulties the rescue effort might encounter. In this instance the climbers could have lowered the patient over a cliff on the wrong side of Crater Rock, or descended the wrong side of mountain due to white-out conditions. Do not attempt a self-rescue if it may cause the victim’s condi-

tion to deteriorate more (or cause greater harm) than a wait for outside assistance with greater resources.

Second, in Oregon, Search and Rescue is the responsibility of the County Sheriff. The Ski Patrol is responsible for assisting injured skiers within the ski boundary and is not prepared to assist injured climbers high on the mountain. If an accident occurs on Mt. Hood, it is important to call 911, which can route the call to the appropriate resources in an efficient manner. Calling the ski patrol or a ski resort instead of 911 can complicate and extend the time needed to assemble a rescue team. (Source: Steve Rollins, Portland Mountain Rescue)

FALL ON ROCK, PROTECTION PULLED OUT

Oregon, Smith Rock, Crack of Infinity

On June 3, Rod Lucas (45) was leading Crack of Infinity, a 5.10b trad route rated three stars, requiring gear to three inches, according to Alan Watts' *Climbers Guide to Smith Rock*. Rod released his hold on the overhanging crux just three feet above his last solid piece and to his surprise, blew a #3 and a #2 stopper from the rock, falling 25 feet to a ledge and then another 15 feet to the deck, landing on his back.

With a broken ankle and pelvis, Rod was placed on a stretcher and lowered to the path by Redmond Fire and Rescue and a host of helping hands from fellow climbers. He reached the hospital about four hours after the fall.

Analysis

Rod Lucas lived near Smith Rock and climbed regularly with the pioneers through the 1970's and 80's. He has climbed Crack of Infinity several times in the past. He knows that he was not off route on the adjoining Friday's Jinx (5.7 R), described by Alan Watts as follows: "This sinister route put a half a dozen people in the hospital during the 80's. Oddly, the rock is solid and the protection reasonable, but for unknown reasons gear-ripping falls are a common occurrence on the first pitch."

Later, his friend Chris, a climbing instructor, inspected the route on Crack of Infinity and reported a double fist sized hole where Rod's first solid piece blew out of the rock. His second piece was deeply scored.

This is Rod's first serious accident in nearly 30 years of climbing, including all of the major peaks in Washington and Oregon. However, "Climbing is a sport where you may be seriously injured or die," as stated in the "Climber's Guide." (Source: Robert Speik)

FALL ON ROCK—POOR POSITION, INADEQUATE PROTECTION

Oregon, Smith Rock, Zebra

On June 23 Grant Pease (38) was leading Zebra, a 5.10a trad route rated three stars and requiring gear to three inches, according to Alan Watts' *Climbers Guide to Smith Rock*. Grant was high on the wall on a near horizontal traverse of a thin crack leading to the Zion route finish. He found that he was not able to protect the crack with his gear. He was about 15 feet out when, uncomfortable, he started to make his way back toward his last secure protection. He slipped off the traverse and made a 23 foot pendulum fall into the rock dihe-