

FALL ON ROCK, PROTECTION UNCLIPPED, INADEQUATE PROTECTION

Utah, Big Cottonwood Canyon, Beware of Dog

On July 2, Paul Sternman (24) suffered a ground-fall of approximately 60 feet on Beware of Dog, a 10d sport climb at the upper S-curves, Big Cottonwood Canyon. The route has four bolts. The first three cover the crux of the climb, followed by a long run-out on easier terrain. Paul was leading between the fourth bolt and the chains when he fell. This became a long fall because his quickdraw unclipped from the carabiner on the fourth bolt. His belayer tried to take in rope, but Paul hit the ground just as the rope started to become taut. He was wearing a helmet and the helmet did take a significant impact. SAR team members packaged him in a litter and vacuum splint, then lowered him one short pitch to gain clear distance from the wall where he was hoisted by a Lifeflight helicopter.

Analysis

The quickdraw was found on the ground with only one carabiner attached. The other carabiner, a Black Diamond straight gate, remained in place at the fourth bolt. Its gate had been forced open past the nose of the carabiner and was open as far as the gate hinge would allow. It had some new scarring on the surfaces facing away from the rock. The gate pin, hinge, and gate notch were all completely undamaged and the gate still moved freely.

The bolt had been placed in an extremely bad location. It was just above an edge on less than vertical rock, resulting in loading of the carabiner over the edge. In any orientation, the gate of this carabiner would have been in contact with the rock. This makes the gate vulnerable to being opened in a fall, which both reduces the strength of the carabiner and creates a possibility for unclipping to occur.

We believe that as Paul climbed above the bolt, rope drag lifted the quickdraw up so that it was positioned on the gate. When he fell, the gate was pushed open and pried sideways past the nose, allowing the quickdraw to release from the carabiner. It requires much less force to pry a gate sideways than it takes to break a carabiner.

Paul was described by his friends as being extremely safety conscious. Both his use of a helmet while leading a sport route and his other quickdraw placements on the route are consistent with this description. All of his draws were clipped correctly, and they were all set up identically, with a straight-gate carabiner clipped to the bolt and a wire gate carabiner clipped to the rope.

There are a few things that Paul could have done to reduce the chance of an accident. Some climbers carry one draw set up with locking carabiners for placements like this. In this case, a locking carabiner on the bolt-clipping end would probably have prevented the accident. There were also possible gear placements between the third and fourth bolts. An intermediate piece

here would have prevented this from being a ground-fall. (Source: Tom Moyer, Salt Lake Country Sheriff's Search and Rescue)

FALL INTO CREVASSSE

Washington, Mount Rainier, Ingraham Glacier

About 5:00 p.m. on July 7, rangers at Camp Muir were notified by Rainier Mountaineering, Inc., of a climbing team of three at the 13,000-foot level on the Ingraham Glacier in possible need of assistance. One of the team (49) was crossing a snow bridge when he fell ten feet into a crevasse. Though his fall was arrested by his two climbing partners, he injured his shoulder. They were descending slowly to their camp at Ingraham Flats.

Rangers Ken Davies and Lynn Finnel were dispatched from Camp Muir to assess and assist the injured climber. At Ingraham Flats, they found the team and Ken Davies, an EMT, performed an initial medical assessment. He placed a sling and swathe on the injured shoulder. The climber said he could walk, but that he could not tolerate any weight on his shoulder. The rangers assisted him in descending to Camp Muir. The climbers continued on down to the Paradise parking area. Enroute they met two physicians. Their examination indicated that the injury was probably a dislocation. (Source: *Bergtrage*)

(Editor's Note: This was the only report from Mount Rainier for the year. Note this data which comes from Ranger Mike Gauthier's website: www.mountrainierclimbing.blogspot.com

Total Climbers Registered in 2006 = 9,154, Independent Climbers = 5,022, Guides and Clients = 4,132, Total Summits = 5,787

"More exciting than summit attempts and success is the fact that we had no major rescues on the upper mountain in 2006! That's right, no fatalities or serious accidents above 10,000 feet. This is somewhat of a remarkable accomplishment, and the NPS would like to thank all the climbers for making safe decisions that contributed to this amazing statistic. No serious accidents: This is a trend we would like to see continue."

FALL ON ROCK—DISLOCATED KNEE, FALL ON SNOW—UNABLE TO SELF-ARREST, EXCEEDING ABILITIES, INABILITY TO CONTINUE DUE TO INJURIES, TRYING TO PLEASE OTHERS, INADEQUATE COMMUNICATION

Washington, North Cascades, Mt. Baker, Spider/Formidable Couloir

Marty, Dave, Doug and I (Mike) all met as volunteers on a local mountain rescue team. Among the four of us we had varying degrees of rescue, mountaineering and rock climbing experience. Additionally, Dave and Doug are members of a popular mountaineering club. Doug is also a certified EMT.