

(38) and Chris Klinga (25) were attempting Doub-Griffith, a 5.11c 3-pitch traditional route that starts from a small ledge 150 feet above the base of Redgarden Wall. As Lee was climbing, he inadvertently pulled a large, table-sized flake free from the wall. The rock hit Lee in the abdomen, causing both Lee and the flake to fall. Using a Cinch auto-locking belay device, Klinga stopped Lee's fall after which Klinga was struck with the rock that had broken loose, injuring both his legs. Lee was able to get to the ground and walk out on his own.

Rocky Mountain Fire and Rocky Mountain Rescue climbed to Klinga's location and set up an evacuation system. The team evacuated Klinga off of the rock ledge and down to the road. The evacuation included a 150-foot vertical and a 300-foot scree lowers. Klinga was transported to St. Anthony's Central by a medical helicopter.

Analysis

Loose rock is relatively common objective hazard. Climbers should be wary of loose rock by testing handholds, avoiding sections of loose rock, and not being in a direct line of potential rockfall from above. Climbers should also ask themselves, "What if?" In this case, what sorts of precautions can be taken by the belayer to protect the leader if the belayer is incapacitated during a leader fall? (Source: From rockymountainnews and bouldercounty.org websites and Aram Attarian)

FALL ON ROCK, PROTECTION PULLED OUT

Colorado, Eldorado Canyon State Park, Bastille, Werk Supp

On July 14, Preston Brennan (47), an experienced climber, and his partner were climbing Werk Supp, a 5.9 route located on the Bastille. Witnesses noted that while on the first part of the climb, Preston had placed two nuts and was working on the third for quite some time. He placed another about ten or so feet above the third. While placing the fifth piece, he lost his grip and fell, hitting the left side of his forehead on rock and losing consciousness for the rest of the fall, since he made no sound and came down "like a rag doll". Two of the nuts pulled. He fell at least 50 feet suffering serious brain injuries, which eventually led to his death a week later. (Source: H. Urie, *The Daily Camera*, July 19, and a series of postings on mountainproject.com)

FALL OR SLIP ON ROCK, CLIMBING ALONE

Colorado, Eldorado Canyon State Park, Bastille, Werk Supp

Michael Hankins (47), an experienced and highly regarded climber from Oklahoma set out to solo Werk Supp (5.9) on July 22. He fell when he was 50 feet into the climb. Hankins was airlifted to St. Anthony Central Hospital in Denver. He suffered compound fractures to both his legs and left arm, a broken pelvis and brain injury. He later died from his injuries.