

Analysis

Late season conditions (normal in October!) existed on the route making the novice climb technically difficult. Biddle later admitted that he had gone beyond his abilities to travel safely on the icy terrain. Without the support of a rope team, a novice solo climber takes great risks on technical terrain. (Source: Jeff Sheetz, Portland Mountain Rescue)

FALL ON ICE, ROPE SEVERED ON JAGGED ROCKS

Pennsylvania, Toby Creek, Buttermilk Falls

Police in Luzerne County say Luke Wolfgang (age not reported) fell 30-40 feet when his rope was cut on jagged rocks as he tried to climb the Buttermilk Falls area of Toby Creek.

Rescuers say the New Hope man was climbing with friends yesterday morning when the accident occurred. They say he was taken to a Scranton hospital with injuries that did not appear life-threatening, though he did suffer some broken bones.

Officials say his friends had to walk to the highway to get help because there is no cell phone service in the climbing area. (Source: From an Associated Press article sent to us with no date or additional information.)

FALL ON ROCK, CLIMBING UNROPED

Pennsylvania, Tohickon Valley Park

Joseph McDevitt (26) was in serious condition yesterday after plunging at least 70 feet to the ground in a fall off a cliff in Bucks County. He was airlifted and treated in the intensive care unit at St. Luke's Hospital near Bethlehem, officials said.

Analysis

The 200-foot cliffs of red shale along Tohickon Creek are popular among climbers. While falls like McDevitt's "do occur, it's not commonplace," county spokesman Chris Edwards said.

A witness said McDevitt had no rope or safety harness. Witnesses differed on whether McDevitt wore a helmet. (Source, from an article by Jeff Gammage, in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. No date given)

(Editor's Note: We are sure that other incidents occur in PA. At the moment, we rely on inconsistent sources for information from this region.)

FALL ON ROCK – RAPPEL ERROR (UNEVEN ROPES)

South Dakota, Needles, Moonlight Ridge

Another climbing legend passed on today. On June 24, Paul Duval (71) died of injuries sustained when he rappelled off the end of an un-equalized rope at Moonlight Ridge.