

up, stick clipped the first bolt, and then I came over and put CL on belay. I stood just to her right, at the base of the wall under the first bolt. She started up the route, hung the second draw, repositioned, and as she reached for slack to clip, her left hand slipped off of her hold and she came crashing to the ground. She landed on her back on a flat boulder, her head just at its edge. Her eyes rolled back in her head, she seized, and only moments after impact, a stream of blood flowed from the back of her head!

With a nurse on site CL was stabilized until the ambulance arrived. Most improbably, she sustained only a minor laceration and sizable bump on her back and some lingering head and body aches.

Analysis

There are several precautions that could have been taken to prevent such an accident: stick-clipping the second bolt, spotting the climber, belayer being prepared to take in a lot of slack in a hurry by jumping off of something, first and second bolt being located nearer to each other. In retrospect, I wish CL had a helmet on her head, that I had been spotting her, and that the second bolt had been stick clipped. Any of these things could have made a serious difference, but the procedure we followed is typical, and the one I most often see being followed by others at The Red. Almost everyone knows the dangers of clipping the second bolt, including CL, and her hand slipping was unexpected. As she said, she was not excessively nervous or pumped.

This has been a lesson to me to never climb something, or allow someone else to climb something, if there is a potential for a ground fall, because there are always factors for which one cannot account. (Source: From a post on www.redriverclimbing.com)

FALL ON ROCK, INADEQUATE BELAY, DISTRACTION

Kentucky, Red River Gorge, Military Wall

A large group was gathered at Military Wall on September 12 playing music, possibly loud enough to make communication between climber and belayer difficult. Climber was getting into the upper knee bar on Reliquary (5.12b) when he fell near the last bolt. The climber landed on the belayer's dog, killing it instantly.

The belayer was holding the GriGri in her right hand with fingers over the cam-gri preventing it from locking and said she didn't know how it could have happened. Worse yet, she said this was the third time it has happened to her.

Analysis

Crags are becoming more crowded and distractions occur. Music, dogs, kids, cats, bears, etc. Pay attention to the climber! That person's life is in your

hands! And don't pick up a belay device if you don't have proper training. (Source: From a post on www.redriverclimbing.com)

FALLING ROCK, POOR POSITION

Kentucky, Red River Gorge, Muir Valley

On October 19, a climber (age unknown) lounging on a boulder under a route at the Solarium was struck in the head and shoulder by a rock that had been dislodged by a climber above on an overhanging route. The injured party was given first aid treatment and delivered to an ambulance outside the Valley. (Source: From a post on www.redriverclimbing.com)

FALL ON ROCK

Kentucky, Red River Gorge, Roadside Crag

On November 20, a climber (age unknown) on Ro Shampo (5.12a) "smashed" their belayer into the boulder below the climb because they forgot to unclip the belay end of the rope after cleaning bolt #1 and taking the swing. (Source: From a post on www.redriverclimbing.com)

(Editor's Note: With the many Web sites devoted to climbing now in existence, we are learning more than we want to know about the kinds of errors climbers are making as a result of inexperience.)

FALL ON SNOW, FAULTY USE OF CRAMPONS, UNABLE TO SELF-ARREST

New Hampshire, Mount Washington, Lion Head

On March 6, a hiker was descending the steep section of Lion Head trail when snow had balled up in his crampons and he fell approximately 50 feet, injuring his lower leg. While bystanders began to haul him down the trail, the Snow Ranger that was returning to Hermit Lake from the first incident rerouted to respond to the incident. The patient's injuries were stabilized and he was transported to Pinkham Notch by snowmobile as well.

Analysis

The Lion Head Winter Route is a steep trail where conditions change quickly from day to day or even during the course of a single day. We recommend that an ice ax for safer travel on this route. (This assumes the ability to use this equipment properly.). In this instance, the patient had ski poles rather than an ice ax. For the purposes of arresting a fall in steep terrain, an ice ax is a far more effective tool than just regular ski poles. Self-arrest ski poles, such as Black Diamond's Whippet would serve as a good compromise.

Wearing crampons on descent in the kind of snow that will ball up is not recommended. If the snow is firm enough to use crampons on descent, then the climber will be facing sideways or in. (Source: www.mountwashingtonavalanchecenter.org and Jed Williamson)