

of ice that broke, he did not have time to retrieve the line.

Ralph fell to the base of the climb and slid down slope. He suffered head trauma and did not pass instantly, but soon after coming to a stop, as evidenced by the fact that he had time to remove gloves and touch the wound, but not much after that.

Analysis

Solo climbing and late season ice don't mix, especially in the Southeast. (Source: Josh McMann, from a post on carolinaclimbers.org)

FALL ON ROCK, POORLY CONSTRUCTED ANCHOR

North Carolina, Hanging Rock State Park, Moore's Wall

On May 2, Drew Witt (28) and I, Lee Kennedy (23) were climbing Zoo View (5.7+). I set up the belay by building an anchor on the large boulder located on the Crow's Nest (Pitch 1, < 80 feet). Before Drew started the second pitch, I decided to make the anchor redundant by slinging a smaller boulder located under the larger primary boulder. Drew started the pitch and climbed about 30 feet, placed a cam (unknown #), climbed an additional ten feet, then fell.

I was yanked directly to the left, which loaded the smaller boulder, dislodging it. It would have fallen, but I had it slung tight enough that it stayed attached, hanging below me! It was heavy enough (maybe a couple of hundred pounds) that it prevented me from moving. Luckily, there was someone else on the Crow's Nest who helped me pull the boulder to a small ledge where we were able to pull the sling off, then trundled the boulder to the ground.

Analysis

I was inexperienced holding trad falls and was unaware of the forces involved. Most importantly, I should have checked the secondary boulder to make sure it was adequate for an anchor. This can be done in a number of ways. Do a hug test—any boulder you can get your arms around is too small to use as an anchor. Boulders used for anchors should be secured to the surrounding environment and should not move when tested. Rule out any boulder that appears ready to be tipped over the edge. In hindsight, the large boulder would have been an adequate anchor by itself. (Source: Lee Kennedy)

FALL ON ROCK, RAPPEL FAILURE/ERROR, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT

North Carolina, Paint Rock

Paint rock (also known as Graffiti Rock), a popular roadside rappelling and training site in Pisgah National Forest was the scene of a rappelling accident on August 15 involving Jane and John Doe.

John had limited climbing experience through the military; his girlfriend Jane had no climbing experience. The pair had two ropes, one a climbing

rope, the other a non-climbing rope purchased from a box store (origin or type unknown). Both ropes were anchored for a rappel.

Both climbers were wearing climbing harnesses. Jane was attached to the box store rope with a prusik loop. The prusik was constructed out of a “shoe lace” looking cord (i.e. not designed for climbing) and attached to her harness with a carabiner. She was not using a belay/rappel device. John was attached to the second rappel rope with the rope running through a carabiner attached to his harness. He had no belay/rappel device.

The couple moved to the edge of the cliff to begin their rappel with their backs to the fall line. Based on an examination of the scene, it appeared that Jane fell first while “rappelling” and landed on a four-foot wide rock shelf approximately 40 feet from the top and 15–20 feet from the ground. John went down to help her and then fell to the ground about 60 feet below.

Both climbers were discovered with burns on their hands. John suffered two leg fractures (one an open fracture) and Jane had a broken wrist and a spinal injury.

Analysis

This accident speaks for itself. Both individuals had no business attempting to rappel with no knowledge, inadequate equipment, and experience. Upon inspection, Jane’s “prusik” along with the sheath of her rope melted, causing her to lose control. Chances are if she had let go of the prusik sooner it may have prevented her from serious injury. John never had a chance. His burns were a result of his hand being the sole friction device on the rope. He may have forgotten to wrap the spine of his carabiner to create a carabiner wrap (common in military rappelling) in his haste to aid Jane. Rappelling presents a unique set of dangers that aren’t found in other forms of climbing. A functional belay rappel device, a backup system utilizing an autoblock or similar friction knot and the knowledge on how to use it along with the proper equipment may have prevented this unfortunate incident. (Source: K. Delap and A. Attarian)

FALL ON ROCK, OFF-ROUTE

North Carolina, Blue Ridge Parkway, Shiprock

The three of us had been climbing since late morning on September 4. It was now early evening and two of us decided to try an unnamed route described to us by a climber we met on our previous trip to Ship Rock. We checked out the features and picked out the route as best we could from the ground. I geared up and began climbing. The first part of the climb involved a juggy, run-out section up some blocks and over a small bulge to the base of a low angle slab. The slab offered plenty of protection, so I geared up for the roof above me. After placing good gear near the lip of the roof, I pulled over it without much difficulty and placed what would be my final piece, a