

also my belayer knows I hate being short roped. So he couldn't tell, and I couldn't tell him I was in a bad place to be given too much slack. 3) I should have down climbed and re-assessed the moves instead of going through expecting that, as usual, I would stick when in fact I was on incredibly dense/slick granite. Again I didn't treat it with the respect it deserved and I got spanked. (Source: Brice Harris from a post on mountainproject.com)

STRANDED, UNFAMILIAR WITH DESCENT

Colorado, Eldorado Canyon State Park

On October 15, rescuers were notified that two overdue climbers, Nicholas Kainrath (22) and Bryan Karban (23), were stranded on a rock climb in the Canyon. A search was started and the climbers were located. The two advised members of Rocky Mountain Rescue that they did not know how to get down from their current position. They were guided down by the rescuers. (Source: Boulder County Sheriffs Department)

Analysis

Climbers are encouraged to familiarize themselves with traditional self-rescue techniques, carry a route topo, and become familiar with descent routes to prevent situations like this from occurring. (Source: A. Attarian)

STRANDED, DARKNESS, POOR PLANNING

Colorado, Boulder Canyon, Castle Rock

On October 24, Gary Hansen (54) and his daughter Kate (17) became stranded on Castle Rock on a ledge 200 feet up the East Face after dark as they attempted to rappel. A rescue climber from the Rocky Mountain Rescue Group climbed over Castle Rock and descended to the stranded climbers. Each of them was then lowered to the ground, and they were both safely on the ground at 10:30 p.m.

Analysis

While these were experienced climbers, the situation they found themselves in was largely attributable to a lack of familiarity with the area, and not allowing enough time for their climb to the summit. Once on the summit after dark, they chose a descent route for which they were not properly equipped. However, they then made the right decision to call for help rather than attempt to climb further in the dark in an unfamiliar area. (Source: Boulder County Sheriff's Office)

STRANDED, CLIMBING ALONE, FREE SOLO CLIMBING, OFF ROUTE, INADEQUATE EQUIPMENT

Colorado, First Flatiron

Late in the afternoon on December 10 Xavier Rojas (20) became stranded while free soloing the Direct (Standard) East Face (5.6), a six-pitch route on the First Flatiron. According to authorities, Rojas was

about 500 feet up the face when the temperature started falling and the rock iced up. In order to avoid the ice, Rojas went off route until he reached a spot where he could not continue. He was wearing a sweatshirt and climbing pants, and he had a headlamp. He used his cellphone to call 911 and communicate with rescuers, who arrived at the Flatiron by 6:25 p.m. and were able to call to Rojas. He was cold, but not injured.

To reach Rojas, rescuers used ice-climbing gear to get to a point about 180 feet above him, reaching him at 7:50 p.m. They provided him with extra clothing, then hauled Rojas up the 180 feet to the rescue point. A short rappel brought Rojas to the ground. He and his rescuers hiked out to the trailhead by 9:00 p.m. (Source: The Denverchannel.com)

Analysis

When soloing long routes, consideration should always be given to one's skill level, time of day, weather and rock conditions, and clothing and equipment needs before leaving the ground. Cell phone and proximity to rescue helped in this case. (Source: Aram Attarian)

FALL ON ROCK, RAPPEL ERROR – NO KNOT ON ROPE END, NO HARD HAT, INEXPERIENCE

Colorado, Eldorado Canyon State Park

During the afternoon of December 17, Dalton Jones (18) and his female partner (17) were climbing Rewritten (5.7), a six-pitch climb on the Redgarden Wall. Jones successfully led the first pitch, established an anchor, and began belaying his partner. Approximately halfway through the climb, she began to have some difficulty. At this point he lowered her to the base of the climb and told her to stay tied in.

To descend, he set his rope on an anchor and rappelled on the single, free strand of rope, using his partner as the lower anchor and the upper anchor as a redirect. He neglected to check the length of his rappel strand and to tie a knot in the end. As a result, he rappelled off the end, falling about 30 feet. He landed approximately two feet from his partner. He was not wearing a helmet and suffered a two-inch laceration to the back of his head and a fractured left femur.

The first rescuer reached Jones at 1:32 p.m. Jones complained of head pain and severe upper leg pain but was alert and oriented. He was packaged onto a litter for evacuation at approximately 2:44 p.m. and a Flight for Life chopper was requested. Rescuers then evacuated Jones down the hill on a belayed litter to the creek. A Tyrolean traverse was utilized crossing the river. At 3:35 p.m., Jones was placed into an ambulance for transport to the waiting Flight for Life chopper.

Analysis

Why didn't Jones' partner see what was about to happen? Inexperience. The dangling free end that he was about to rappel was clearly visible from his position and would have been visible to her as well.

A rappel backup might have prevented this accident. The two