

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

primary methods of backup for preventing mistakes or loss of control include tying a knot on the end of the rope or using a Prusik or other friction knot attached to the rappel rope and the climber's harness. Better communication between Jones and his partner (or vice versa) may also have prevented this accident, especially since his partner was inexperienced. (Source: Bill May and Aram Attarian)

FALL ON ROCK, BELAYER TAKES HAND OFF ROPE

Kentucky, Red River Gorge

On Friday, March 4, I (name and age not on post) was climbing at The Motherlode on a route called Kick Me in the Jimmie (5.12) when I fell late in the day. The last fall of the last climb of the day should have been a routine, clean ~12-foot leader fall onto the fifth bolt. After the expected catch passed, it became clear that my belayer didn't have control of the rope. I fell about 35 feet to the ground.

I remember bracing myself for impact, hitting the ground, and letting everyone know that I was okay about one second after I hit. I injured my ankle and my butt hurt. I was able to walk out just fine. The belayer had rope burns on the wrist of his non-brake hand.

Analysis

My belayer had been climbing for ten years and I'd been climbing with him for just over a year. He was belaying with a tube-style device similar to a Wild Country VC Pro.

From what we could gather, he took his brake hand off the rope for a split second while moving into a better position to catch the fall. Once he realized his hand wouldn't be able to get the rope, he tried compressing it by leaning forward and just pressing his forearms onto the device/rope and in the process received rope burns on his forearm.

Relying on the belayer now is mentally difficult for me. I tried climbing on the following Sunday and Monday. Even being lowered is terrifying if I start to accelerate even a little bit. If this accident had been with an inexperienced belayer, I could have blamed myself, finding fault with trusting a "beginner" belayer. But now, considering that someone with ten years of experience dropped me, I have gotten in the mindset of, "How can I really trust anyone?" My plan is to go to the gym and practice taking larger and larger falls until I can get back to my old self. Please stay alert while you're belaying. It's your only job. (Source: Edited from a post on rockclimbing.com)

FALL ON ROCK, POOR COMMUNICATION, INADEQUATE BELAY – DISTRACTED

Kentucky, Red River Gorge, Muir Valley

On March 21, I took a lead fall, landing at the base of the climb Suppress the Rage (5.12a) located at the Sunny Side. I was at the