



AAC Publications

Rappel Error - Ropes Uneven and No Knots in Ends, Miscommunication

New York, Adirondacks, Chapel Pond Canyon

On December 18 a climber rappelled off the short end of his rope at 30 feet, fell 20 feet to a ledge, tumbled 20 feet more over steep terrain, and slid another 20 feet on steep snow. He suffered a broken pelvis and torn adductor tendon.

Analysis

A 40-year climbing veteran improperly rigged his rappel in such a way that the ends were grossly uneven and there were no end knots in the rope. The scene was a 90-foot ice cliff, and the climber was using a 60-meter, 7.8mm rope. There was no halfway mark on the rope. The climber had poor communication with climbers on ground. There was no line of sight, so only voice communication. The climber relied on mistaken voice communication that ropes were even and down at the bottom. Lessons:

1. Never climb on a rope that doesn't have the halfway point clearly marked.
 2. Never rely on questionable voice-only communication with the ground.
 3. Always be mindful of the pie graph showing that 29 percent (highest of all) of rappelling accidents occur because of uneven ropes.
 4. Always bring both ends of the rappel rope to the top anchor if ever there is a question of rope unevenness.
 5. Always tie separate knots at each end of the rope and feed the rope evenly through the top anchor until the halfway mark is reached.
 6. Always use a backup in case the ropes begin to run out of control through the rappel device.
- (Source: Tom Yandon.)

Images

Article Details

Author	
Publication	ANAM
Volume	10
Issue	67
Page	84
Copyright Date	2014
Article Type	Accident reports