



## AAC Publications

---

### **Fall on Rock – Climber Unroped**

Colorado, Sangre de Cristo Range, Crestone Needle

**On September 3, Dr. Matt Davis (41), a trauma director at Scott & Baylor Memorial Hospital in Temple, Texas, and his partner, Ryan Brown, attempted Crestone Needle, a 14,203-foot peak, via the Ellingwood Arete (III 5.7).** Davis and Brown selected the route's direct start, climbing three pitches of 5.6/5.7, instead of a longer 3rd-class traverse on ledges to reach the upper pitches. Davis and Brown had completed the initial roped section and were scrambling 3rd-class ledges toward the final pitches when Davis slipped, falling over 100 feet to a large ledge system above the lower wall. Brown descended to his partner and discovered that he had died upon impact. (Source: Rock and Ice and Custer County Search and Rescue.)

### **ANALYSIS**

It is not uncommon to encounter a mix of 5th-class climbing and scrambles during a mountain ascent, but the risks of climbing unroped must be weighed and quick belays considered. According to Cindy Howard of Custer County Search and Rescue (CCSAR), the fall may have been partially attributed to Davis wearing climbing shoes during the scrambling section. While climbing shoes are appropriate for fifth-class rock, the smooth rubber can be slick on muddy, icy, snowy, or grass-covered surfaces, and great care must be taken when scrambling in rock shoes. Approach shoes may have been more appropriate for this section of the climb. (Sources: Cindy Howard, CCSAR Captain, and the Editors.)

## Images



The Ellingwood Are te of Crestone Needle climbs the blunt prow facing the camera. The Red Gully on Crestone Peak (peak on far right) lies on the opposite side.

## Article Details

Author	Cindy Howard, Captain, Custer County Search and Rescue
Publication	ANAM
Volume	11
Issue	69
Page	66
Copyright Date	2016
Article Type	Accident reports