



## AAC Publications

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### **Rappel Error – Uneven Ropes, No Stopper Knots**

Oregon, Smith Rock, Cocaine Gully

**On November 21, a 31-year-old, moderately experienced climber had finished Deep Impact (5.10c), an 80-foot sport climb.** She planned to rappel from the anchor. She established the rappel and started down, but 25 feet above the ground she rappelled off the end of one strand of the rope. The climber fell to the ground and sustained significant fractures to both lower legs and a shoulder injury.

#### **ANALYSIS**

For unknown reasons, the rope ends were uneven when the climber set up the rappel, and neither she nor her belayer noticed the problem. Before committing to a rappel, it's a good practice to ask people below, if possible, if both rope ends are down. No stopper knots were tied at the ends of each strand of rope. Although some climbers may feel that such knots are unnecessary for single-pitch rappels that end at the ground, in this case stopper knots likely would have prevented a serious accident.

(Sources: Deschutes County Sheriff's Office Search and Rescue and the Editors.)

## Images



Rescuers evacuate a climber from the Cocaine Gully area at Smith Rock.

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