
DRT entry then SRT upward. Can that be right?

Posted by Ron - 10/02/2006 05:44pm

had an interesting problem on a climb Saturday; of course they're all interesting to me because I haven't been climbing much, errr, that should be that long - I've been climbing quite a bit. Anyway...

I have a nice Ash tree with a strong 'U' shaped fork about 25 feet up the tree. The two "trunks" extend upward from the fork at about 10° from vertical. I measured the left "trunk" above the fork, to have a circumference of 22 inches, which is a diameter of 7 inches. Once I get to the fork, there are no substantial limbs/crotches until about 20 – 25 feet up. There, of course, the 7 inch diameter has slimmed down, the limbs in the crotch at that point are not especially substantial, plus, even if the crotch would hold me, it is very cluttered with smaller limbs, and at that point, I'd have considerably leverage on the tree due to the 10° slant of the trunk, especially if I swung out on the limb.

I wanted to go up the tree past the fork, so I used 20 feet of PMI MaxWear 11 mm nylon rope to SRT from the crotch. The problem was that there were no limbs strong enough to support me so I had to apply a technique I developed when I first started doing "limbless" climbs.

I had an F8 with a bight in each end of the rope, so I threw one end over some spindly branches and back around the tree so that I could "noose" around the tree using a delta screw link to close the noose. This makes the rope cinch the tree, and not the limbs.

I put an ascender on the rope, gradually transferred to the ascender, making sure the SRT tie-in was secure. I SRT'd up about 5 feet with my DRT still in place. Everything was secure so I disconnected from the DRT tie-in.

I had ascended as far as I could on the first SRT tie-end so I brought up the other end of the 20 foot rope and looped it over some twigs as I did the first time. Actually, the only function of the limbs is to hold the unweighted rope in place while the "noose" is tightened about the tree.

I gradually transferred to an ascender that rope, and again making sure of the security of the tie-end. It started getting late, but now I could reach up and "rescue" my throw weight that was solidly caught in a fork.

The only thing I fell short on (hmmm, I don't believe I like that phrase) was only having two ascenders. A third would have been much more efficient doing the change-overs. I had to use the foot ascender to transfer to the new placement and install a prusik loop to connect the foot loops to the new rope. This took some time; a third ascender, as I normally use, would have been much faster.

Then I realized that I wouldn't be able to install my Micro Rack to rappel back down to the fork, but I knew I could stand-sit down the rope. Well, I could have, but by the time I got everything adjusted, etc. I could just stand-sit down, which I did.

The remaining problem was that when I get down to the fork, how to get the SRT rope down. So I tied my Slickline to the delta link and started down. After re-establishing the DRT tie-in at the fork, I disconnected from the SRT rope and pulled on the Slickline and the rope came down easily.

I need/want to go up higher in the tree, but I'm very reluctant to because of the size of the "trunk" above the fork – it's only about 7 inches near the fork. I felt ok doing the two pitches because I only went up about 8 - 10 feet and I stayed near the inside of the trunk to minimize outward load on the fork. Also the fork is probably as strong a fork can be, it's very U-shaped and quite robust – it's just that the trunks from the fork up are a bit small.

I do need to cut a small limb on up the tree on the left fork. I'm not so worried about the limb breaking as I am the fork splitting due to the leverage of my weight so far out on it, so I think, just for the enlightenment of fun of it, I'm gonna go up the right fork a little ways and tie a support rope from the right fork to the left one using either a 3:1 Z pulley arrangement or an interesting 3:1 rope configuration that I've been wanting to try for some time. The latter is self-locking and requires no tie-off. Although, anticipating breeze motion I will secure it.

I'll still have to SRT up from the fork, but I put eye splices in a 20 foot piece of Velocity rope to use for the SRT rope. The eyes won't be nearly so bulky as a F8 with a bight and you can actually bend the Velocity rope ;)

Climbing is fun and challenging isn't it!

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