

# From Smith to Honnold

## A Brief History of Rock Climbing

### The Father of Rock Climbing

Walter Parry Haskett Smith is commonly known as the Father of Rock Climbing. In 1886, he made the first (free solo) ascent of the Napes Needle in the Lake District of England.

### Rocking Climbing is Recognized as a Sport (1880s)

In the late 1880s, the United Kingdom recognized rock climbing as a sport. The founding area of rock climbing as a sport is called the Lake District.

### The Steel Carabiner is Introduced (1910)

This new device was stronger and safe than its predecessor (the Maillon) because it was made of steel and had an automatic closing gate.

### First Nylon Rope (1935)

A climbing company called Dupont invented the first nylon rope, which was much stronger than previous ropes. Manila and hemp used to be used for rope.

### Climbing El Capitan (1958)

Warren Harding and his team were the first to climb the Nose of El Capitan. They used siege tactics and it took 47 days to get to the top. They used 125 bolts during the process.

### First Climbing World Cup (1989)

Started by the Union Internationale des Associations d'Alpinisme (UIAA, lit. International Union of Alpine Clubs), the first world cup only had lead events - difficult routes that test a climber's ability.

### Highest Grade Climbed by a Woman (2017)

Margo Hayes is a climber from Boulder, Colorado. On February 26, she climbed a redpoint 9a+ route at La Rambla in El Pati crag in Siurana, Catalonia, Spain.

### Climbing in the Olympics? (2020)

As of now, there are plans to include rock climbing in the Tokyo Olympics. Participants will compete in bouldering, speed and lead challenges.

### Start of Bouldering (1874)

It began in Fontainebleau, France, which soon became a place for rock climbers to develop their bouldering skills.

### The First Chess Harness (1880)

Dutch Climber Jeanna Immink invented the climbing harness when he was having a difficult time climbing a route.

### Free Climbing or Free Soloing (1914)

Technically free climbing was originated when the first man climbed a rock, but in 1914, it was separated from normal climbing. Free climbing is rock climbing without protective gear or ropes.

### Beginning to use Chalk (1955)

Climbers began to use chalk to help them grip the rock and wisk away sweat.

### 'Sticky' Climbing Shoes (1982)

This new invention, created by Spanish company Boreal, allowed climbers to stick to the rock face better, especially when they couldn't find a foothold.

### First Free Solo Climb of El Capitan (2017)

Alex Honnold is a free solo rock climber from Sacramento, California. On June 3, he became the first climber to take on El Capitan without ropes or a protective harness. His film, *Free Solo*, won an Oscar for best documentary.