

'Climbing just for climbing's sake'

The Shield: When did you start rock climbing and what originally got you into it?

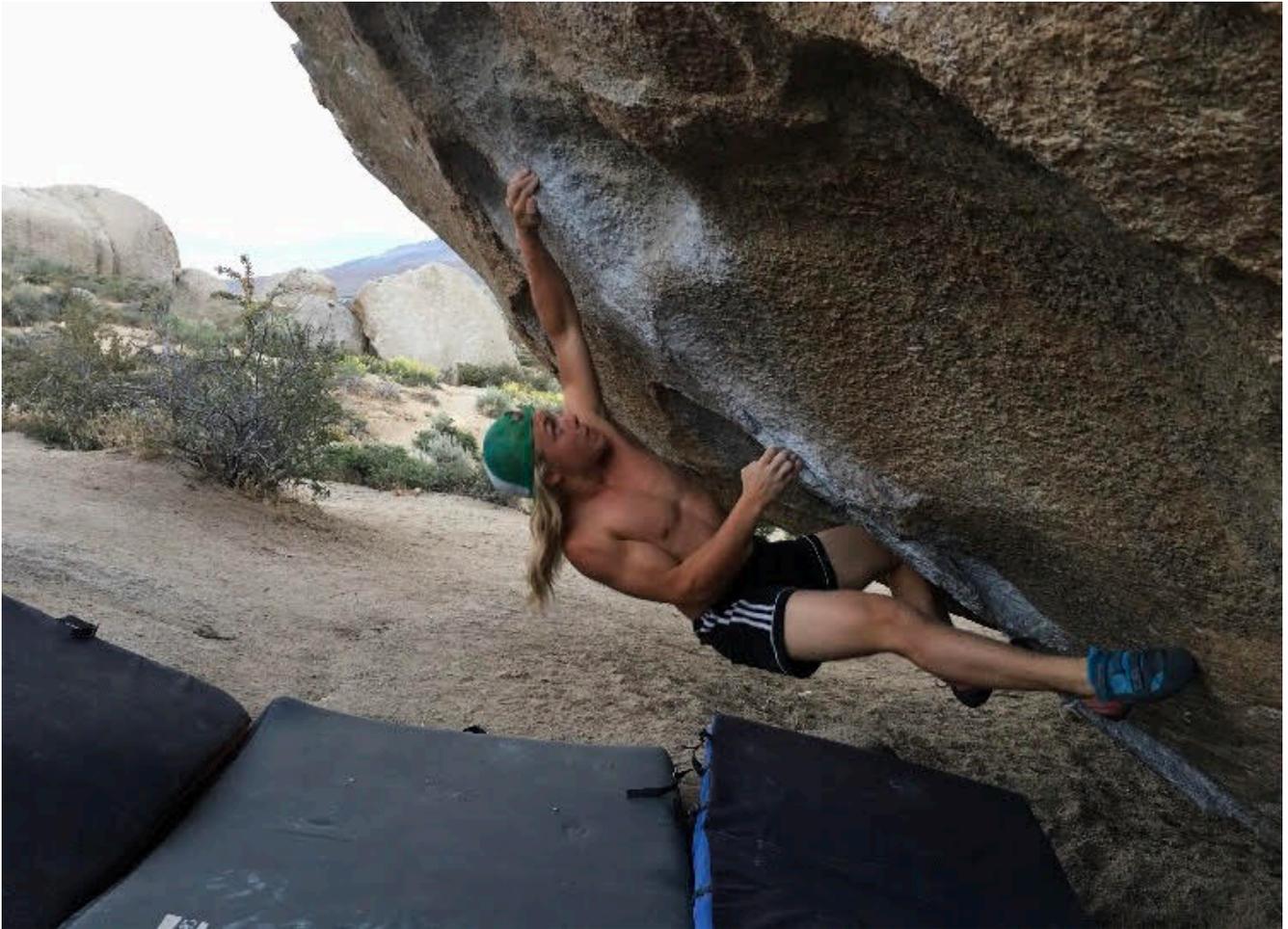
Zach Steiner: I started almost four years ago now. I started because I was into American Ninja Warrior. American Ninja Warrior was really popular and seemed super fun, so I thought that climbing would be a good way to get on the show. Eventually I sort of moved away from that and started climbing just for climbing sake.

TS: How long has the Climbing Club been around at McCallum?

ZS: The Climbing Club has been around for a while. I think even before Mr. Wydeven took over. It's been around for a long time, but it's gotten really big recently.

TS: What has been your biggest accomplishment in your four years of climbing?

ZS: My biggest accomplishment so far has probably been doing five V-7 Outdoors. V-7 is just a grade in climbing, it's sort of like an intermediate level. That's just my personal best, being able to do that has been really awesome.



Zach Steiner practicing bouldering, a type of rockclimbing. "Bouldering is climbing without ropes, and shorter, more dynamic climbing". Photo courtesy of Zach Steiner.

TS: How are climbing competitions ranked?

ZS: For ranking, in big competitions, it's based off how far up you get on a route and how many tries it took you to get to that highest point. There's three divisions in USA climbing. There's "sport" which is ropes climbing, "bouldering" which is climbing without ropes and shorter more dynamic climbing. There's also speed climbing, which is a whole other discipline.

TS: What type of climbing do you practice?

ZS: I practice predominantly bouldering and some sport climbing.

TS: How often do you practice?

ZS: With my new schedule that I'm on, I practice three to four days a week.

TS: What does a typical workout look like?

ZS: A typical workout is usually just some climbing, working on particular routes, and different moves that trip me up. After that we usually do a core or an arm workout.



Steiner bouldering at Waco Tanks in El Paso, Texas. "Waco tanks is one the premiere bouldering spots in the world and it's just right outside El Paso". Photo courtesy of Zach Steiner.

TS: Do you have a coach or a trainer who instructs you?

ZS: When I was on a team I had a coach, but now I have a private trainer. He gives me a schedule for the month that tell me what I need to do each day. I just follow the schedule every month and that's how I train.

TS: Do you think that you being vegan and very diet conscious gives you an edge over your competitors?

ZS: I haven't thought about that a whole lot. I think that being more conscious about my diet has helped me get to where I am as fast as I have. For most people getting to the level that I'm at can take a really long time, but because I'm conscious about my diet I was able to improve a lot faster.

TS: Tell me a little bit about the Rock Climbing Club.

ZS: Our first meeting [was] October 23 and for our first meeting [we just talked] about what we want the climbing club to be this year, how often we want to go out and practice, how relaxed we want to be, times, membership details and stuff like that. But when we get farther into the year, all it will be is [meeting] every Thursday at Austin Rock Gym, and we just climb and hangout. It's a super relaxed environment and you really don't have to have any prior experience to join.

TS: Where's your favorite spot to climb and why?

ZS: I think my favorite spot would have to be Waco Tanks in El Paso, Texas. It's basically this group of huge rock structures and they're situated all around these mountains. It's one of the premiere bouldering spots in the world and it's just right outside of El Paso.