

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A packer, comprising:

a mandrel having a longitudinal section, the packer being releasable from a set configuration in response to the longitudinal section being severed;

a slip support; and

a load transfer device that extends longitudinally across the longitudinal section of the mandrel, the load transfer device being secured to the mandrel on a first longitudinal side of the longitudinal section, and the load transfer device being secured to the slip support on an opposite second longitudinal side of the longitudinal section.

2. The packer of claim 1, wherein the load transfer device is releasably secured to one of the mandrel and the slip support, and wherein the load transfer device is released for displacement relative to the one of the mandrel and the slip support in response to the longitudinal section being severed.

3. The packer of claim 1, wherein a tensile load is applied to the load transfer device in response to tension being applied to the mandrel.

4. The packer of claim 1, wherein a tensile load is applied to the load transfer device in response to a pressure differential being applied to the packer in the set configuration.

5. The packer of claim 1, further comprising a biasing device that displaces a portion of the mandrel relative to the load transfer device in response to the longitudinal section being severed.

6. The packer of claim 1, wherein the load transfer device comprises an engagement member engaged with the slip support, wherein the engagement member is supported by the mandrel.

7. The packer of claim 6, wherein the engagement member is released from engagement with the slip support in response to the longitudinal section being severed.

8. A method of constructing a releasable packer, the method comprising:

assembling a mandrel, at least one slip, a slip support, and a load transfer device, the mandrel having a longitudinal section, and the packer being releasable from a set configuration in response to the longitudinal section being severed; and

wherein the assembling comprises preventing relative longitudinal displacement between the load transfer device and the mandrel on a first longitudinal side of the longitudinal section while preventing relative longitudinal displacement between the load transfer device and the slip support on a second opposite longitudinal side of the longitudinal section; and

wherein the assembling further comprises engaging an engagement member of the load transfer device with the slip support, and supporting the engagement member with the mandrel.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein the load transfer device is releasable for displacement relative to one of the mandrel and the slip support in response to the longitudinal section being severed.

10. The method of claim 8, wherein the load transfer device is released for displacement relative to the slip support in response to displacement of a portion of the mandrel relative to the load transfer device after the longitudinal section is severed.

11. The method of claim 8, wherein the assembling further comprises compressing a biasing device, thereby biasing a portion of the mandrel toward a position in which the engagement member is not supported by the mandrel.

12. The method of claim 8, wherein the assembling further comprises compressing a biasing device, whereby the biasing device

biases the slip support toward a position in which the slip is permitted to retract when the longitudinal section is severed.

13. The method of claim 8, wherein the assembling further comprises positioning the load transfer device radially between the mandrel and the slip support.

14. A well system, comprising:

a packer releasably engaged with a well surface surrounding the packer, the packer including a seal that seals against the well surface, at least one slip that grips the well surface, an inner mandrel, a slip support and a load transfer device that releasably secures the inner mandrel against displacement relative to the slip support, and the load transfer device being secured to the mandrel at a position longitudinally between the slip and a longitudinal section of the mandrel, wherein the load transfer device is secured to the mandrel on a first longitudinal side of the longitudinal section, and the load transfer device is secured to the slip support on an opposite second longitudinal side of the longitudinal section.

15. The system of claim 14, wherein the load transfer device is releasably secured to one of the mandrel and the slip support, and wherein the load transfer device is released for displacement relative to the one of the mandrel and the slip support in response to the longitudinal section being severed.

16. The system of claim 14, wherein a tensile load is applied to the load transfer device in response to tension being applied to the mandrel.

17. The system of claim 14, wherein a tensile load is applied to the load transfer device in response to a pressure differential being applied to the packer while the seal engages the well surface.

18. The system of claim 14, further comprising a biasing device that displaces a portion of the mandrel relative to the load transfer device in response to the longitudinal section being severed.