



AAC Publications

Fall on Rock, Protection Pulled Out - Inadequate Protection

California, Yosemite Valley, El Capitan, Nose

On May 30, Mike Drake (22) was leading when his top aid piece failed on the upper half of the "Pancake Flake" (pitch 23, 5.10a C1), above the Great Roof. He fell about 25 feet, striking a couple of ledges; he attributes the long fall to having back-cleaned a good piece, thinking he'd need it later. His partner lowered him to the belay and got him into their portaledge. NPS personnel lowered rescuers to him from the summit. They packaged him in a litter, continued lowering with him to the ground, and transferred him to an air ambulance.

Analysis

He was diagnosed with a fractured elbow, four fractures of the pelvis, four fractured ribs, and a collapsed lung. (Source: From a self-report by Mike Drake on Supertopo.com in October 2012: "Falling on the Nose: A Four Month Journey.")

Contributing factors included under-protecting (back-cleaning the piece) and possibly not taking a large enough selection of pro on the pitch. In his excellent trip report at Supertopo, Mike points out the risks of a skimpy rack and of back-cleaning on aid. (Source: Mike Drake via John Dill, NPS Ranger.)

Images

Article Details

Author	
Publication	ANAM
Volume	10
Issue	66
Page	35
Copyright Date	2013
Article Type	Accident reports