



AAC Publications

Fall on Rock, Inadequate Belay - Rope Ran Through Belay Device, No Knot in Rope-End, Inexperience

Colorado, Boulder Canyon, Happy Hour Crag

During the early afternoon on March 24, Ira Lewis (33) climbed Malign (5.7), a one-pitch trad route on the Happy Hour Crag. After Lewis completed the climb, his partner on the ground began to lower him on their 60-meter rope. The belayer was not tied into the rope, and the end of the rope did not have a stopper knot tied in it. When the end of the rope was reached, it pulled through the belay device, causing Lewis to fall 15 to 20 feet. Other climbers in the area heard the fall, and one hurried down to his vehicle and drove into Boulder to call 911 while others remained with Lewis. Personnel from the Sugarloaf Fire Department, Rocky Mountain Rescue Group, and the Boulder County Sheriff's Office responded, as well as an American Medical Response ambulance. Both climbers were wearing helmets. Lewis was briefly knocked unconscious and suffered other injuries. He was stabilized by medical personnel, placed into a rescue litter, and transported to the Boulder Community Hospital with nonlife-threatening injuries.

Analysis

The belayer did not have basic belayer training to watch for the middle mark on the rope or tie a knot in the end. The leader and belayer did not talk about rope length versus climb distance before beginning the climb. (Source: Boulder County Sheriff's Office, www.bouldersheriff.org, and RMRG.)

Images

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