



AAC Publications

Fall on Rock, Cardiac Arrest - Dehydration and Lack of Blood Pressure Medication

Kentucky, Red River Gorge, Muir Valley

Late in the afternoon on June 19, a man (44) was climbing a sport route named Earth Surfer (5.11d) in Muir Valley. While on lead about 50 feet up and being belayed by his 15-year-old son, he groaned and went limp as though he had passed out. He then took what would be considered a long, but moderate, fall of about 25 feet. He stopped in air about level with the second bolt, the fall being skillfully arrested by his son. The victim did not impact the rock face on the way down, nor did he impact the ground. After falling, the victim was hanging limp in his harness and was not moving. His son immediately lowered him to the ground, where other climbers in the area tried unsuccessfully to locate a pulse or detect breathing. Two young men started CPR while another ran to a Muir Emergency Station and radioed for help. Rick Weber, lead WFR, was nearby and arrived at the scene about 10 minutes after the victim fell. He radioed the county dispatcher and requested a helicopter. He then took over administering CPR. Other Muir Valley Rescue volunteers arrived and assisted with CPR for about an hour. After determining that there were no signs of life, efforts at resuscitation were terminated. The medical examiner determined that the victim died of a massive coronary event and that death occurred immediately.

Analysis

The victim's son, who was belaying him, reported that his father had run out of blood pressure medication. The pair had been climbing all day in 90-degree weather on strenuous routes. (Source: Rick Weber.)

Images

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