



AAC Publications

Inadequate Protection - Misperception of Difficulty

California, Yosemite National Park, Half Dome

On May 13, Peter (31) and Alain (26), both from France, were climbing pitch six of the Regular Northwest Face (VI 5.9 C1), hauling a bag for a bivouac at Big Sandy Ledge. Peter took a 20-foot lead fall on the crack labeled “5.9 polished fingers” in the Supertopo guidebook. One piece of protection pulled and he landed on a ledge, injuring his ankle. They rappelled to the base and called 911. They bivouacked that night, and the next day Peter was assisted by SAR team members to hike up to the main hiking trail on Half Dome. From there the NPS gave him a horse ride out due to his sprained ankle.

Analysis

Peter said that he misjudged the difficulty and the amount of protection needed to avoid the ledge. He rates himself as a 5.13 climber, but he fell on a 5.9 section. This is a good reminder that ratings are subjective, and that Yosemite crack climbing is a specialized technique. (Source: John Dill, NPS Ranger.)

Images

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