



AAC Publications

Fall on Rock, Protection Pulled Out, Inadequate Belay

Colorado, Boulder Canyon

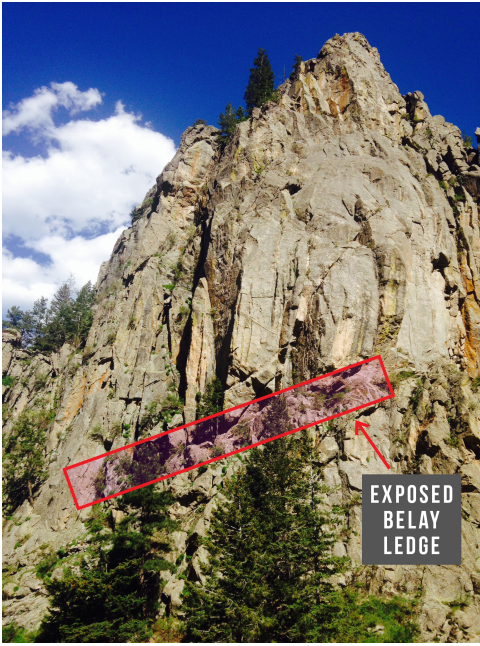
Late in the afternoon of August 22, two male climbers (both 24) fell approximately 70 feet while attempting the Spoils (5.12a/b) on Bell Buttress. The accident occurred after the leader rested on a piece of protection he had placed before the first bolt. The leader attempted the next move and came off, pulling the piece, and in the process pulled his unanchored belayer off a ledge. They both tumbled all the way into Boulder Creek.

Both climbers were conscious and breathing at the time of their rescue. They were transported to Boulder Community Hospital. (Source: Edited from a report at Mountainproject.com.)

Analysis

Many of the climbs on Bell Buttress start from a narrow ramp that traverses the cliff above a lower rock band. Although climbers often choose to belay with no bottom anchor on this ledge, this incident clearly demonstrates why a secure anchor must be established anytime the belay stance is exposed. (Source: Aram Attarian.)

Images



Bell Butress, in Boulder Canyon, where many routes begin from a narrow ramp that traverses the cliff 100' above the base.

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