



## AAC Publications

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### **Fall on Rock – Exceeding Abilities, Inadequate Protection**

Oregon, Smith Rock State Park, Zebra Zion

**On May 4, Forrest Koran (24) and Suruthai Pokaratsiri-Goldstein (27) began climbing a four-pitch trad route called Zebra Zion (5.10a).** The climbers were members of an “Advanced Rock” class hosted by a local climbing organization. Koran led the fourth and final pitch, placing two small cams before he fell with about 15 feet of rope between himself and the belayer. Both cams pulled out and Koran impacted a 70–80° slab of rock after falling about 30 feet. He was reported to be unconscious for several minutes after the fall. (He was wearing a helmet.) The belayer tied off the belay at the anchor, called 911, and waited for rescue. Rescuers reached the climbers from above, and Koran was lowered approximately 500 feet and taken by helicopter to the hospital, where he was diagnosed with a sprained ankle, minor concussion, and minor injuries.

#### **ANALYSIS**

The injured climber was moderately experienced, with more time in the gym than outdoors, and he was leading a four-pitch 5.10 route that was likely beyond his abilities. His mentor was reportedly a 5.11 climber, but not a certified guide. Both cams placed by the subject failed to hold the fall—one cam’s lobes were folded inside-out in a manner consistent with a cam placement that is too small for the crack. Fall factors are greatest closest to the belayer, and therefore it is advisable to place more pieces in the first 15 to 30 feet of a pitch, especially in locations with consequential terrain below (in this case the slab under the belay). No effort was made to self-rescue. (Source: Matt Crawford, Deschutes County Search and Rescue.)

**Images**

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