



## AAC Publications

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### **Fall on Rock – Inadequate Belay, Poor Position, No Helmet**

Texas, Austin, Barton Creek Greenbelt, Gus Fruh Wall

**On February 14 a climber (19) fell off the sport climb Birdland (5.10+), hitting a wide ledge about 20 feet off the ground.** I (Adam Hosterman, 30) was climbing nearby and saw the accident. A friend of the climber scrambled to the ledge from an adjacent climb, and then I climbed up with some extra gear. While the friend stabilized the patient's head and neck, I clove-hitched the climber's rope into the first bolt on the route. (The rope above was clipped into draws on the first and second bolts, with no quickdraw clipped to the third bolt.) The patient was conscious but confused and complaining of pain at the back of his head. I noticed a rope burn behind his left calf.

When paramedics arrived, about 15 minutes after the accident, they sent up a C-collar, which I placed on the patient. High-angle rescuers arrived shortly afterward and set up a line to lower the patient to the ground. He was carried to the road in a litter, having suffered lacerations and a likely concussion.

#### **ANALYSIS**

Based on where the climber fell, after clipping the second bolt, it appears there may have been excessive slack in the belay rope, given the ledge-fall potential. With a rope burn on the back of his leg, it's likely the climber fell with the rope behind his leg, possibly leading to a head-first fall. The climber told me he only had about a year of experience, primarily in gyms, and had never been to the Gus Fruh Wall.

This was my first personal response to a climbing accident that required high-angle rescue and first-aid skills. I feel this really put my Wilderness First Responder training to the test. Had the injury been worse or the location farther out of town, having trained personnel on site would have been even more critical. (Source: Adam Hosterman.)

**Images**



Rope burn on the back of the leg.

## Article Details

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