



AAC Publications

Fall on Rock – Protection Pulled Out

Colorado, Boulder Canyon, The Boulderado

On March 16, in the early evening, I was climbing at the Boulderado. As a moderately experienced climber, but new trad leader, I attempted to lead Jam It (5.8-). This single-pitch route passes a small roof with a great hand-size crack. After placing a cam vertically in the crack, I pulled up over the roof and bulge to a small shelf. While squatting on this ledge, with one hand gently jammed in the crack, I attempted to place a nut. As I attempted to set the nut, it pulled out. The unexpected jerking motion resulted in enough momentum to pull me off the ledge, resulting in a significant fall of roughly 15 to 20 feet, including slack and rope stretch. I slammed into the wall below the roof on my right flank and hip, coming to a stop about eight to ten feet above the ground.

The impact resulted in significant pain and bruising to my pelvis and right, lower kidney area. X-rays and a CAT scan revealed no fractures or severe internal bleeding, but I did have bruising, abrasions, and lacerations. (Source: Anonymous report to Accidents website.)

ANALYSIS

Overconfidence on a relatively flat, wide ledge resulted in a lapse of attention. It's not uncommon for a nut to pull out when you're setting it. Anticipate this possibility and place nuts from solid holds in a well-balanced position. A light tug is usually enough to assure the piece—and the climber—stays put. (Source: The Editors.)

Images

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