



AAC Publications

Fall on Rock – Inadequate Experience

New Hampshire, Echo Lake State Park, Whitehorse Ledge

Two climbers chose Whitehorse's classic Standard Route (5.5) as an introduction to multi-pitch climbing. They set off the morning of August 29 equipped with a traditional rack and a single rope. At around 3 or 4 in the afternoon, the lead climber aided through the crux sixth pitch, leaving an aider attached to a fixed piton to ease the passage for the second. The second climber fell out of the aid sling and slammed into the wall. While she sustained no significant injuries, she was rattled. Upon reaching the belay, the climber refused to continue. Unable to rappel with their single line, the pair waited on the massive tree ledge below the seventh pitch of the route. Three hundred feet of 5.1 to 5.2 terrain led to the summit of Whitehorse Ledge from this location.

At around 8 p.m., three members of the Mountain Rescue Service ascended Standard Route and made several tandem rappels with the two climbers to the base of Whitehorse Ledge. Of note was the fact that one climber's harness was not doubled back when we reached him.

ANALYSIS

Inexperience and poor planning skills necessitated this rescue. It is essential that climbers have goals and terrain that mirror their experience. Neither climber had made a rappel prior to this outing (the tandem rappels were their first). Seeking proper instruction or choosing less committing goals when learning is a good way to avoid rescues. (Source: The Editors.)

Images

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