



AAC Publications

Fall on Rock – Inadequate Protection

New Hampshire, Barber Wall, Cathedral Ledge State Park

On Sunday, August 30, a climber fell 40 feet near the top of Double Vee, a popular but tricky-to-protect 5.9 at the Barber Wall on Cathedral Ledge. While he had four pieces of protection in, all but one (a number three Camalot ten feet above the ground) ripped out, resulting in a ground fall. An EMT was at the Barber Wall, and within minutes several members of the Mountain Rescue Service and volunteers had arrived on scene as well. After fixing ropes across a few exposed spots, backboarding the patient and placing him in a litter, MRS members and volunteers raised the litter to the top of Cathedral Ledge to a waiting ambulance.

ANALYSIS

This route has had a few accidents in recent years. The top is very difficult to protect and insecure for the grade. Given this, the leader must be extremely comfortable on the terrain. The climber might have been able to retreat and reconsider his options before committing to the tricky terrain and bad protection above. Taking the time to place a few good pieces in the middle of the route may also have prevented a ground fall. Not moving above gear that's suspect is a good way to prevent a fall like this from happening. (Source: The Editors.)

Editor's note: A similar accident occurred at the North End of Cathedral Ledge in June, when a 25-year-old man leading Kiddy Crack (5.7) pulled two pieces of protection and fell a reported 50 feet to the ground. He was wearing a helmet, which may have prevented a serious head injury.

Images

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