



AAC Publications

Rockfall – Inexperience

Oregon, Smith Rock State Park, Picnic Lunch Wall

On March 14, a large group of climbers from the Yale University Climbing Club was climbing at Smith Rock. Two climbers headed up Voyage of the Cow Dog, a three- pitch 5.9. One of them (age 20) was following the third pitch when he dislodged a microwave-size block above shoulder level. The rock fell and lacerated his right lower leg to the point where a bone was visible. He was unable to rappel without assistance, so the climbers called 911 for help. Rescue teams responded and assisted with the rappel.

ANALYSIS

Voyage of the Cow Dog does not see the same level of traffic as many of Smith Rock's routes, and the Picnic Lunch Wall is known for having some poorer rock. This climber had little outdoor experience and thus likely had limited experience with loose holds. Test holds by rapping on them with the palm or knuckles, listening for hollow sounds and watching for movement. **With suspect blocks, always pull down and not out.** (Source: Matt Crawford, Deschutes County Sheriff's Office Search and Rescue.)

Images

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