



AAC Publications

Leader Fall – Ankle Snagged By Carabiner

New York, Shawangunks

Toward the end of the day on November 19, I started up a 5.10c trad route called Star Action in the Trapps. At the crux, I went for the jug but fell off. Though it should have been a short, clean fall, my leg slid along the rope and intersected a protection piece. I was flipped upside down, and when I looked up I saw the carabiner stuck into my ankle, just behind the Achilles tendon. I was hanging by my ankle. I screamed for help, then managed to pull myself up with the rope and unclip the nose-hooked 'biner from my ankle. My partner lowered me to the ground. Miraculously, I had no tendon damage or other serious wounds, and only needed two stitches to close the wound.

Analysis

Though my leg was not behind the rope, the position of the rope and the protection did allow my leg to slide along the rope and catch on the runner below. When my partner cleaned the route later that day, he said that where I had placed my leg felt like the natural spot. It seems like a freak accident.

Editor's note: An incident like this would be very difficult to predict. However, if such a hazard were known or foreseen on a climb, clipping the piece to the rope with a locking carabiner would prevent such an impalement. (Source: Anonymous report from the leader.)

Images



Injury caused by the leader's foot snagging a carabiner during a fall.

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