



AAC Publications

Leader Fall – Inadequate Protection

California, Yosemite National Park, Tuolumne Meadows, Daff Dome

Around midday on August 12, a climbing party on Crescent Arch (5.10a) on Daff Dome reported that the 48-year-old, male leader had taken a 25-foot fall and sustained a dislocated shoulder and what appeared to be a broken ankle. It was reported that the belayer was pulled up while catching the fall and may have been slightly injured.

While climbing the second pitch of the route, the leader had reached a stance and placed a nut, but he was unhappy with the placement. While trying to remove the nut and find a better placement, he lost his balance and fell. He attempted to catch himself and dislocated his shoulder from the sudden jolt. About 10 feet below he hit a ledge, resulting in the ankle injury, then fell about 15 feet farther before his rope arrested him.

A team climbing above saw the accident, fixed their ropes, rappelled down, and assisted the leader as his partner lowered him to the first big ledge they could reach. They decided to wait there for SAR, which had already been contacted and was en route. The Tuolumne SAR team ascended to the patient, provided care, and lowered him to the ground.

ANALYSIS

The leader was almost 10 feet above his last piece when he was struggling to replace the nut. One option that might have prevented this accident would have been to clip the rope to the first nut, even if it wasn't perfect, and then work on a new piece of protection, only removing or re-placing the original piece once a better piece was clipped. (Source: Yosemite National Park Climbing Rangers.)

Images

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