



AAC Publications

Ground Fall – Protection Pulled Out

North Carolina, Pilot Mountain, Veg-O-Matic

On September 17, a male climber, JC (23), took a ground fall that resulted in a medical evacuation. JC was leading Veg-O-Matic (5.7+ or 5.8), a one-pitch trad climb, when he fell approximately 40 feet to the ground. A climber on an adjacent climb observed the fall and called in the incident. He stated that JC was pulling the final overhang (and crux) of the route, just before reaching the fixed anchors, when he fell. A finger crack-size cam pulled out, failing to stop his fall.

Emergency medical services arrived at 2:40 p.m. The patient was able to answer questions about his name, day, time, birthday, and location but did not remember what had happened and continued throughout the rescue to ask how far he had fallen. Responders and park visitors began the carry-out at 3:24 p.m. JC was carried in a Stokes basket up the Ledge Springs Trail and then hauled with a pulley system up to the summit area. Here, he was placed into an ambulance. (Source: Pilot Mountain State Park and Mountain Project.)

ANALYSIS

Ample protection is available on this climb, suggesting the leader did not place enough pieces to prevent a ground fall when his cam pulled out. Small cams require experience for solid placements and should not be the sole piece preventing a major fall. It is not known if the patient was wearing a helmet. (Source: Aram Attarian.)

Images

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