



## AAC Publications

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### **Ground Fall – Inadequate Protection**

Tennessee, Chattanooga, Suck Creek Canyon

**Late in the morning on November 20, Josh Benti (26) and Jordan Tidbal-Sciullo (26) met Drew Bailey (39) at the Suck Creek climbing area and decided to climb a 5.8 offwidth (name unknown).**

While racking up, Josh noticed that no one in the group had any gear larger than a number 3 Black Diamond Camalot. Nevertheless, after a game of rock, paper, scissors to decide who would lead, Josh started up the climb, with Jordan belaying.

He placed his first piece at about seven feet. After climbing an additional 10 feet, he began to look for a second placement, but the crack was too wide for the number 3. After discussion with his partners on the ground, Josh decided to try to sling a chockstone in the crack at his waist. Drew tossed a sling up to Josh and he successfully girth-hitched the chockstone. However, while attempting to clip the rope, he lost his grip and fell approximately 20 feet to the ground, landing on his left shoulder and damaging his helmet. Josh was able to respond to questions and his breathing returned to normal, but during an assessment his partners noticed significant swelling in his right ankle. Josh was able to walk out with assistance from Jordan and Drew. Once at the hospital, it was revealed that Josh had broken his ankle.

### **ANALYSIS**

Following the accident, the climbers noted there were a number of times when Josh could have backed down from the route. If you don't have the appropriate gear for a climb, pick a different route or just don't climb that day. When you're struggling to make a clip, it's sometimes best to back down to the previous piece or a stance, recover for a moment, and then return to the high piece to clip the rope. (Sources: Josh Benti and the Editors.)

**Images**

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