



AAC Publications

Deep Water Soloing Injury

West Virginia, Summersville Lake, Rats Hole

At 7 p.m. on August 23, Jesse Grupper (age 18) was attempting an unclimbed project (now 5.13d) during the first deep water solo competition on real rock in the United States: PsicoRoc 2016 at Summersville Lake. After successfully negotiating the climb to the final move, Grupper fell approximately 55 feet and landed feet-first in the water below.

Multiple witnesses reported that Grupper seemed to bend forward just before impact, causing his upper body and head to impact the water at a slight angle. Upon surfacing, he was picked up by an event watercraft, whose driver immediately called for the medical team to evaluate Grupper. He was transferred to the medical support boat, evaluated for injuries, and evacuated to a nearby hospital. Grupper was determined to have suffered a concussion and a broken tooth from the impact of the fall. (Sources: Seth Hawkins, MD, and Deb Simon, RN, Vertical Medicine Resources.)

ANALYSIS

This fall was from a height greater than previous ones during the competition, and the additional height was most likely the primary cause of the injury. Grupper may have expected an earlier landing and looked down in anticipation, causing his upper torso to angle forward and impact the water upon entry. During the rescue, the climber's spinal motion was restricted but not immobilized, following new guidelines for out-of-hospital trauma care. (Source: R. Bryan Simon.)

Images

Article Details

Author	R. Bryan Simon
Publication	ANAM
Volume	11
Issue	70
Page	100
Copyright Date	2017
Article Type	Accident reports