



AAC Publications

Ground Fall – Fixed Quickdraws Broke

California, Owens River Gorge

Jordan Cannon, 22, was attempting Bongo Fury (5.12b), a bolted arête in the Joe's Garage area, in late March. All of the bolts were pre-equipped with quickdraws made with thin Dynex (polyethylene) webbing. When Cannon fell above the third bolt, the quickdraws at both the third and second bolts broke and Cannon fell about 20 feet to the rocks below the route. He landed on his tailbone and hit his head on a rock but fortunately was not seriously hurt.

ANALYSIS

The hazards of fixed quickdraws are well-established. These quickdraws had been in place for about a year. The webbing on one of them broke at the upper carabiner (bolt end) and the other at the rope end. This climb receives little to no sun, but wind in the gorge likely caused the quickdraws to swing back and forth, abrading the webbing. Cannon said he did not see any damage to the draws, but the abrasion could have been hidden on the inside of the webbing. Fixed quickdraws of all kinds (including steel "perma-draws") also may develop worn grooves or burrs in the rope-end carabiner, which can shred or even cut a rope.

Fixed draws are convenient—and may be unavoidable on some climbs—but climbers should try to inspect them before attempting a route and consider replacing or supplementing them with their own quickdraws. Cannon was lucky to avoid more serious injury—this is a good example of the value of wearing helmets even on "well-protected" sport climbs. (Sources: Jordan Cannon and the Editors.)

Images



Jordan Cannon holds the remnants of two quickdraws that broke when he fell past them in the Owens River Gorge.



Two broken quickdraws that had been fixed on Bongo Fury in the Owens River Gorge and broke as a result of a climber's fall.

Article Details

Author	The Editors
Publication	ANAM
Volume	11
Issue	3
Page	53
Copyright Date	2018
Article Type	Accident reports