



AAC Publications

Fall on Descent – Loose Rock

Oregon, North Sister

On August 12, a male climber (age 49) fell while descending the North Sister via the South Ridge (Grade II, Class 4) after summiting the peak with a group of 11 climbers from a local climbing club. The accident occurred in the “Bowling Alley,” a loose, steep gully, when he stepped onto a boulder that shifted. This caused him to fall onto his back just downhill of the boulder, which then rolled over his outstretched right arm. He sustained a fractured ulna and displaced ulna and radius (lower arm bones) at the elbow. Other members of the group splinted the injured extremity and called 911. Deschutes County Search and Rescue responded and assisted the group’s descent to the southeast ridge, from which a helicopter flew the injured climber to a local medical center.

ANALYSIS

In areas of loose scree and boulders, climbers must remain attentive throughout the descent, but some accidents of this type are practically unavoidable. This party was organized by a local climbing club and was well-led and prepared, including some members with medical training. They were able to treat and begin evacuating the injured climber and likely would have been able to self-rescue had outside assistance not been available. (Source: Deschutes County Sheriff’s Office Search and Rescue.)

Images

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