



AAC Publications

Ground Fall – Protection Pulled Out

Arizona, McDowell Mountains, Tom's Thumb

On November 28, a male climber, DS (21), was leading Succubus, a 5.10 trad finger crack. The crux of the climb is approximately 25 feet up, where you move right under a roof to reach a finger crack. DS placed what he felt was a solid 0.5 Black Diamond C4 and 0.1 Black Diamond X4 under the roof, then reached around the roof to place an insecure 0.3 C4 before committing to the finger crack. As DS continued, his foot slipped. His belayer, AO (female, 27), was ready for the catch, but all three pieces he had placed at the crux pulled and DS fell 30 feet, impacting the ground and breaking his right pinky toe, bruising his back, and hitting his head on a rock. DS was wearing a helmet. After about an hour of rest, he was able to self-rescue by hiking out and driving to a hospital.

ANALYSIS

DS had been climbing for less than a year, and his relative lack of experience placing gear played into the accident. His three takeaways were: 1) When protecting high-risk moves, take the time to make a secure placement before committing; 2) Use the correct gear (people familiar with the route recommended placing nuts as protection under the roof instead of cams; and 3) Always wear a helmet. (Source: DS.)

Images

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