



AAC Publications

Lead Fall – Cam Pulled Out

California, Yosemite Valley, Lower Falls Amphitheater

In late October, I completed a number of routes at Yosemite Falls with some friends. I decided to lead Guiding Light (5.10b trad), a dihedral about 80 feet long with a thinning crack and stemming on slick feet. The line culminates with a thin layback crux about three-quarters of the way up. This route is well within my onsight ability.

Prior to entering the crux, I placed a yellow number 2 Metolius TCU in a flared pin scar at head level. I had a number 6 Black Diamond Stopper roughly a body length below that. I was at a good stance while double-checking the cam placement, and I made sure all three lobes had good contact and were cammed to the green dots on the range finder. With the cam two or three feet below my feet, my right foot smear slipped and I fell. During the fall I may have unknowingly hit and slightly altered the cam placement.

As my rope came taut, I heard a pop and felt the cam impact my right temple, at which time I began to fall again until my next piece (the Stopper) caught me. I suffered a scalp laceration that did not require stitches.

ANALYSIS

I could have “nested” gear due to the marginal placement in a piton scar and connected the pieces with a runner to equalize them. Additionally, I should have been wearing a helmet, as it would have protected me during the fall and from my pulled gear. (Source: Ryan Wood.)

Editor's Note: It's often necessary to “punch it” to a good stance while leading layback cracks, and doubling up on protection is wise before committing to such sequences.

Images

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