



## AAC Publications

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### **Bouldering Fall – Dislocated Ankle on Pad**

North Carolina, Rumbling Bald

**On March 28, Noah Cleveland (20), Ben Rader (19), Carson Yates (19), and I (22) went to Rumbling Bald to boulder. Ben and I were familiar with the area, and our plan was to introduce Noah and Carson to bouldering outdoors, so we focused on moderate problems.** The weather was warm and clear. After climbing one problem, I got on Short Crack (V2). The landing area was flat, with no rocks or roots, and we placed several crash pads. Because the problem was short, I decided not to top out. Instead I dropped about four to five feet onto a crash pad, but I landed on the outside of my right foot, dislocating the ankle. Ben was able to support my shoulders when I dropped, so my head never hit the pad. I was able to reduce the dislocation and elevate it on a log while the rest of the group finished a couple more problems, then I walked out slowly.

The swelling really kicked in on the drive home. Later that night, I was unable to support my weight and could not walk for the next day and a half. I visited an orthopedic specialist who took an X-ray and confirmed that I had dislocated and sprained the ankle. It took me six months to fully recover. (Source: Anna Marie Alewine.)

### **ANALYSIS**

One takeaway from this incident is that you don't have to be climbing a big or difficult objective to get into trouble. In my case, I was doing an easy boulder problem with a flat, well-padded landing zone. You can "play it safe" and still get hurt. Assess the landing area before climbing and make a mental image of where you plan to land. Though not a factor in this accident, careful pad placement can prevent landing on an edge of a pad, as can adjusting crash pads to follow a climber as she moves, especially on problems that traverse. (Sources: Anna Marie Alewine and the Editors.)

**Images**

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