



AAC Publications

Ground Fall – Inadequate Protection

Canada, British Columbia, Squamish, Smoke Bluffs

On July 10, a climber was demonstrating a roped solo system to a friend while leading the route Libya Sucks (5.7). The climber was using a Grigri as his self-belay device. He placed a few pieces of protection low on the route, then stood up at a good stance and placed his next piece (a cam, size unknown) at chest height. He clipped the lead rope to this cam, then attempted to demonstrate that he could rest (“take”) on the rope using his self-belay. However, the piece pulled out, and his earlier protection was too low to keep him from hitting the ground. He landed on his back and broke one vertebra.

ANALYSIS

The climber attributed the cam failure to the fact that the direction of pull on the piece was different than anticipated; he had placed and tested the cam in anticipation of a fall from above, but when he weighted it at the stance, the pull was outward. He also acknowledged it was a “poor placement.” A general lesson from this incident is to back up a marginal piece if it is the only thing keeping you from hitting the ground or a ledge in the event of a fall. In addition, a Grigri is not recommended or approved by Petzl as a self-belay device. (Sources: Facebook post from the climber and the Editors.)

Images

Article Details

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