



AAC Publications

Long Fall — Carabiner Unclipped After Stick-Clipping

North Carolina, Linville, Gorge, Hawksbill Mountain

On June 14, I was belaying a very experienced climber who was attempting to stick-clip through the crux on a route. The climber clipped the second bolt from the ground and then began to pull up on the belay strand of the rope while I pulled in slack. I heard a metallic ping sound and watched the climber fall. I dove off a ledge to take up slack, and the climber came very close to a ground fall, but ended up with only some abrasions.

The dogbone on the quickdraw had somehow detached itself from the carabiner clipped to the second bolt. I went up and retrieved the carabiner and it looked normal, and the dogbone looked A-OK as well. My only conclusion is that while the climber was going hand over hand up the rope, he inadvertently shifted the draw into a kind of “back clip” position in which the nylon dogbone could open the gate of the carabiner and work free. (Source: Anonymous belayer.)

ANALYSIS

Stick-clipping is a great way to protect the opening moves of a climb or to get a top-rope up on a hard sport climb so you can work out the moves. But this also can create an illusion of safety, and it's important not to be complacent about clipping bolts or double-checking the results. When climbers opt to stick-clip the second bolt of a route, it's a good idea to clip the first as well, as backup. (Source: The Editors.)

Images

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