



AAC Publications

Rock Collapse Before First Bolt

Colorado, Shelf Road, Cactus Cliff

On August 8, an unidentified climber fell approximately 40 feet to the ground when the rock beneath his feet collapsed. The climber was scrambling up the 4th-class ramp leading to the first bolt of The Joy of Cholla (5.11d), a one-pitch sport route on the popular Cactus Cliff.

According to a comment posted at Mountain Project the day after the accident, “over 1,000 pounds of rock” reportedly came off, and the climber was airlifted to the hospital, after suffering serious injuries. He was expected to fully recover.

ANALYSIS

This was one of several serious accidents last year involving rockfall on established and well-traveled crags. While Shelf Road’s limestone is generally sound, the area has its share of loose, fractured, and decomposed rock. **Stay alert and test the rock when uncertain, especially when protection (as in this case) is absent.** [Editor’s Note: Two bolts were added to protect this approach ramp in January 2022.] (Source: Mountain Project.)

Images

Article Details

Author	Mountain Project
Publication	ANAM
Volume	12
Issue	75
Page	58
Copyright Date	2022
Article Type	Accident reports