



AAC Publications

Fall on Rock — Inadequate Protection

Montana, Blodgett Canyon, Shoshone Spire

On June 21, Carson Broaddus (24) was climbing with Alexandra Stapleton (24) on the classic Shoshone South Face (5 pitches, 5.8+). The pair had linked pitches one and two. Broaddus was midway up pitch three, leading moderate 5th class on ledgy terrain between steeper sections. He climbed past a flat ledge, making some 5th-class moves, his last gear a number 3 Camalot about 12 feet below. He was traversing a few feet to place some gear when he pulled off a dinner-plate-size flake of granite with his right hand.

Broaddus tumbled 20 feet and struck the ledge with his right hip and lower back. He rolled off and fell another ten feet before swinging into the wall back first. His head hit and cracked his helmet in two. He suffered a Grade 2 hematoma on the right hip and deep bruising, a scalp laceration, and a severely sprained ankle.

With no cell service and no emergency communication device, Broaddus and his partner self-rescued. They built an emergency anchor, did two rappels to the base, and limped back to the trail. They hiked a mile and a half, at one point passing a hiker who ran for cell service and called emergency services. Four hours after the climbers started down, SAR arrived.

ANALYSIS

Runouts on poor rock flirt with disaster. The Shoshone South Face is a classic route on a beautiful multi-pitch spire, and the rock is generally solid. But as Mountain Project states, “The important thing to remember is you’re climbing in Montana, and you’re going to run into the choss sooner than later.”

In retrospect, Broaddus suggested placing more protection on ledgy terrain and testing all holds before trusting them with full weight. Given the damage to his helmet incurred in the fall, he also wrote, “Everyone has heard this before, but listen: Wear a helmet. I would be dead otherwise.”

(Sources: Carson Broaddus, Mountain Project.)

Images



The South Face route on Shoshone Spire in Blodgett Canyon follows a direct line near the left skyline.

Article Details

Author	Carson Broaddus, and Mountain Project
Publication	ANAM
Volume	12
Issue	75
Page	64
Copyright Date	2022
Article Type	Accident reports