



AAC Publications

Bouldering Fall — Poor Pad Placement

Nevada, Red Rock, Kraft Boulders

On March 20, Alonso Rodriguez (25) was climbing Monkey Bar (V2) on the very popular Monkey Bar Boulder. He was part of a group of five, and a total of 15 climbers were at the boulder, with over ten crash pads. On his onsight attempt, Rodriguez fell off the last move. He plummeted ten feet, missed the pads with his right foot, and felt a sharp pain in his heel. He quickly sat down and pulled off his shoe—the foot was already starting to swell. His friends helped him out of the area, each taking turns carrying him on their backs.

At the hospital, Rodriguez was diagnosed with an ankle sprain, with a two-or three-week recovery. Three weeks later, still unable to walk, Rodriguez got a second opinion. New X-rays revealed a badly broken calcaneus. He has since recovered and returned to professional highlining, though he still suffers from arthritic pains. He stopped bouldering after the incident.

ANALYSIS

Many bouldering accidents result from inattentive or absent spotting and poor pad placement. Rodriguez recalled, “Clearly, my spotters were not attentive in any way, shape, or form. I thought when I let go, I’d be hitting soft pads. Instead, one foot landed on pads while the other smashed hard rock. I was also so hyped by the amount of people trying that I didn’t think twice about it. In a sense, ego took over. I will never let that happen again. Safety is paramount in any outdoor activity, and ego is a danger to us all.” (Source: Alonso Rodriguez.)

Images

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