



AAC Publications

Fall on Rock — Quickdraw Unclicked from Bolt Hanger

Colorado, Clear Creek Canyon, Catslab

The quickdraw that failed at Catslab. The carabiner's wire gate is not bent, but rather displaced to one side. When the carabiner was loaded, it must have momentarily opened, because the gate notch shows no damage. Photo: Climber 2

Climber 1 (35) and I, Climber 2 (29), decided to go out for an easy day of climbing at Catslab on April 1. We were experienced, having climbed outdoors for about ten years each. Climber 1 led Overflow Direct (5.10a) with no issues and left the quickdraws for my lead. I started up and made it up to third bolt without any problems. About four feet above the third bolt, roughly 25 to 30 feet off the ground, I fell when my foot popped off. The quickdraw on the third bolt failed, and I kept falling until I stopped less than a foot short of the deck.

ANALYSIS

I cannot think of anything that either of us did wrong. I believe that, while I was falling, either the rope or my body caused the carabiner connected to the bolt hanger to rotate inside of the webbing loop on the dogbone. The loop crossed the carabiner's wire gate and, when loaded, bent the wire to one side. As it deformed, it released the quickdraw. The flipped carabiner remained attached to the bolt hanger. The remaining carabiner and dogbone came down with me, attached to the rope. I'm not sure I could have done anything differently. (Sources: Climber 2 and the Editors.)

***Editor's Note:** There was a similar accident in North Carolina in 2023.

Images



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