



AAC Publications

Fall on Rock — Loose Bolt Hanger

New Hampshire, Sundown Ledge, Main Cliff

A bomber stainless-steel wedge bolt, similar to this, was implicated in an accident when the nut loosened and fell off during a fall. [ardour | Wikimedia](#)

In the late afternoon of May 28, Jesse Han (25) and friends were sport climbing at Sundown Ledge. He was attempting an as-yet-unnamed and unclimbed route just to the right of Mithras. After scrambling to a ledge, he stick-clipped the first bolt and climbed past it. While working the moves approaching the second bolt, he jumped off, about 25 feet above the ground. When his fall loaded the first bolt, the hanger released, resulting in a ground fall.

Han was able to land on his feet in a small flat spot between boulders. He was conscious but suffered injuries to his lower extremities. The hanger and permadraw that were attached to the first bolt remained clipped to his rope. The bolt stud remained in the rock, and the nut was gone.

Fish and Game officers, Conway Fire, and Lakes Region Search and Rescue responded to the call for assistance at 7:30 p.m. Rescuers stabilized Han and transported him by litter to the Boulder Loop trailhead at 8:15 p.m. Han chose to self-evacuate to the hospital to avoid the cost of an ambulance ride. At the hospital in North Conway, he was diagnosed and treated for a fractured ankle and wrist.

Editor's Note: American Alpine Club members at the Partner level or higher qualify for rescue benefits that may include the cost of ambulance services related to a climbing accident. See: americanalpineclub.org/rescue.

ANALYSIS

The bolt in question is a solid 3/8-inch stainless-steel wedge bolt in syenite, a granite-like rock type. However, this bolt protects a traverse, and when a climber traverses, the rope may intermittently pull a permadraw at an angle. During prior attempts on the route, the back-and-forth motion of the permadraw had caused the nut to unthread from the bolt. Han did not notice the loose hanger when he clipped and climbed past it.

When using bolts, try to ensure the hanger has not loosened and the nut remains fully threaded onto the bolt stud. Carrying a small crescent wrench to the crag to tighten loose nuts is a good idea. (Several models of nut tools have built-in wrenches.) **A local climber involved with establishing the route has since replaced the failed hanger.** (Sources: Lt. Bradley Morse of the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department, Rick Wilcox of Mountain Rescue Service, and Jesse Han.)

Images



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