



AAC Publications

Fall Onto Ledge

Connecticut, Eastern Highlands, Ross Rocks

This very foreshortened view of the Gully Wall at Ross Rocks shows Seeking Forgiveness (5.10), marked in yellow. A crack finish above the two-bolt belay (blue X's) has no fixed gear, while the lower part has four bolts (blue X's). This discrepancy may have led a climber to continue up with no protection. Photo: Mike Ricard

On November 24, Mason Amitrano (male, 28) was climbing Seeking Forgiveness (5.10) at the Gully Wall section of Ross Rocks, near the border between Connecticut and Rhode Island. Ross Rocks has a mix of sport and some trad routes. Seeking Forgiveness climbs past four bolts to reach a two-bolt anchor on a ledge at about 35 feet. Above the ledge, one can opt for a crack requiring trad gear, which climbs directly above the anchor and is now part of a route called Trad Direct, or opt for a traverse right to another sport route.

Amitrano fell from above the fourth bolt, hit the ledge, and continued falling for a total of 30 feet. It is unknown if he had clipped the two-bolt anchor on his way above the ledge. He had serious injuries to his skull, neck, elbow, and internal abdomen. First responders of the Danielson Technical Rescue Team, local fire departments, and police responded. Amitrano was stabilized and lowered in a litter to a small boat on Furnace Pond. He was transferred to UMass Memorial Hospital via a LifeFlight helicopter. Amitrano received intensive medical care for 60 days and is undergoing the long road to recovery.

ANALYSIS

On ClimbRI.org, Seeking Forgiveness is described as a former trad climb to which the anchor was added to make it fully sport. The description states that there are “bolts up to the anchor on the ledge where the sport climb ends. Or you can choose to continue up the crack (trad gear 5.10) to the shared anchor on Trad Direct [to the left].” It’s reasonable to speculate that Amitrano expected to find more bolts—and it’s not unreasonable for Amitrano to have expected them.

Areas with mixed sport and trad routes require extra attention. Researching objectives is imperative to discern where and on what routes trad gear is necessary. (Sources: Dan Majercik, Quiet Corner Alerts, ClimbRI.org, and the Editors.)

Images



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