



AAC Publications

Bouldering Fall — Missed the Pads

North Carolina, Crowders Mountain State Park, Dixon School Boulders

On February 18, my friend and I (Anonymous) hiked to the Dixon School Boulders for a session.

We'd been climbing there for a number of years. After warming up in the Lower Patio Area, we went to the classic Galvatron (V3). Since we often climb together, I know my partner tends to fall off to the side of this problem. I tend to fall straight down. Normally there's a third pad covering the seam between our two pads, but this time we didn't have it. We also didn't see the pine needles that had accumulated on the finish—they caused me to slip off the slopy top-out, and I fell about 12 feet. I was ready to roll and aim for my pad, but my heels landed in the seam, injuring my left foot.

I quickly elevated my feet, took off my climbing shoes, and got out my first-aid kit. After taking some pain meds, I wrapped my left foot. I had a pair of high-top hiking shoes and put those on tight. After some of the pain passed, I tried to stand, but that was a big NO!

My partner carried the pads back to the car while I crawled on my knees and scooted on my butt about a mile. I didn't have any displacement, so thankfully didn't need surgery. I was diagnosed with bilateral calcaneus fractures and had air casts on both feet for two months.

ANALYSIS

The two of us had completed this problem before, and the familiarity gave us a false sense of security. I had climbed on Galvatron alone with my usual three-pad set. On those occasions, I had my thick pad closer to the problem. On accident day, my partner's thinner pad was up close while mine was farther back than usual. The top has slopers, and the pine needles didn't help—it would have been good to inspect the top instead of just jumping on the problem. (Source: Anonymous.)

Images

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