



AAC Publications

Ground Fall, No Helmet

Oregon, Smith Rock State Park, Monkey Face

In October 2025, a local climber fell 75 feet and, amazingly, walked away. Photo: Deschutes County Sheriff's Office SAR

On October 3 at 3:09 p.m., I was dispatched after there was a report of a fallen climber on the northeast side of Monkey Face at Smith Rock State Park. A 29-year-old male local had fallen 60 to 75 feet—possibly more. I checked with multiple people on scene; details remained unclear. The climber was not wearing a helmet when first responders arrived.

The climber had landed on his leg and side on the steep, loose scree field below the Monkey Face, and then slid down almost 20 feet. Redmond Fire & Rescue conducted the assessment approximately 20 feet from the base of the face. He had severe bruising up his thigh, lower back, and side. The climber initially refused patient care and walked out under his own power. He was ultimately persuaded by Redmond Fire and his friends to travel to the hospital by personal vehicle. X-rays revealed no further trauma.

ANALYSIS

The details of this accident remained unclear at the time of reporting. The critical unknown is whether the fall resulted from a belayer lowering the climber off the end of the rope or from the climber rappelling off the ends of his rope. In either case, no stopper knot(s) had been tied, creating a scenario that allowed for a 60- to 75-foot fall. The loose scree field below Monkey Face almost certainly absorbed energy that would otherwise have produced a far more serious injury or a fatality. The climber was not wearing a helmet and was fortunate that he did not strike his head. (Sources: Caleb Bryce, Deschutes County Sheriff's Office Search and Rescue.)

Images



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