

the ledge. Her last piece caught her fall. She was able to get back on the climb following the ledge to the tree for the regular belay. Striking the ledge injured her foot, but she had no idea how bad it was. She was able to hike out with the assistance of a walking stick, but still insisted on carrying her pack. She drove herself to Boulder and stopped at the hospital, where she was diagnosed with a Lisfranc fracture. The Lisfranc fracture is a fracture and dislocation of the joints in the mid-foot, where a cluster of small bones forms an arch on top of the foot between the ankle and the toes. From this cluster the metatarsals, extend to the toes. She broke the two middle metatarsals and she lost the Lisfranc tendon, which required surgery to reattach.

Analysis

Always plan ahead. A route map or route description is a good resource to have, especially if one is unfamiliar with the route. Down-climbing is an essential skill all climbers should possess. (Source: From a post on rock-climbing.com, July 29, 2009)

ROCKFALL, FALL ON ROCK

Colorado, Boulder Canyon, Redgarden Wall

I was on pitch 4 of Rewritten (5.7) on August 1 when the party above me yelled down that the block was loose. I've climbed Rewritten before and I knew about the infamous refrigerator block balanced on the ledge above me. I didn't think too much about the warning and kept climbing. When I got to the block, I carefully traversed around it, but when I came to the right side of the block, I stepped on a rock and my foot sank, nudging the block just enough causing it to move. I thought it might miss me, but then it hit my rope and forced me off the ledge headfirst. I ended up falling the entire pitch and was about even with my belayer when the rope finally stopped me! I yelled, "Rock!" as loud as I could, but "rock" was an understatement! I knew others were directly below me and was VERY relieved to find that they were ok. The route was completely covered in dust, pebbles, and some good-sized pieces of rock. After walking around the base of the cliff, I found tree limbs and exploded rock everywhere. My partner's pack was destroyed along with some of its contents. I am thankful that nobody got seriously hurt and that I was wearing my helmet.

Analysis

Loose rock is a common occurrence in many climbing areas. The best way to manage this objective hazard is to, if possible, avoid climbing in areas where loose rock is a known hazard; don't climb below other parties; don't stage, or socialize at the base of suspect routes; evaluate rock integrity as you climb; test holds before committing to them; tread lightly around loose rock; and, of course, wear a helmet. (Source: Micah Issac, Boulder, CO, from a report on mountainproject.com)