

Because Wood was not able to see or clearly hear Powers as he was climbing, failure to discuss what Powers planned to do when he reached the anchors contributed to the confusion that caused this accident. Clearer communication and planning can prevent accidents like this from happening to climbers of all skill levels and experience. That said, taking a climber off belay is a serious decision that should only be made when there is complete clarity about the situation. (Source: Phil Powers)

## **FALL ON ROCK, ROCKFALL**

### **Colorado, Poudre Canyon**

Late in the day on May 23 a female climber (31) was injured when she was struck by a rock and fell about 20 feet in Poudre Canyon, which is northwest of Fort Collins. She suffered a broken ankle, a crushing injury to her hand, and head lacerations. She was wearing a helmet.

She was transported to Poudre Valley Hospital after an hours-long rescue hampered by rugged terrain and darkness. (Source: 9news.com)

### **Analysis**

Rockfall is a common objective hazard in many areas. Be prepared by becoming aware of those areas where it is common and develop the appropriate tactics to avoid being struck by rock fall. (Source: Aram Attarian)

## **FALL ON ROCK, PROTECTION PULLED OUT, NO HARD HAT**

### **Colorado, Boulder Canyon, Practice Rock**

Reid Pletcher (22), and I (Mali Noyes) were climbing together on May 26. This was going to be our last climb of the day. He was leading the climb, placing gear as he ascended. When he was about 20-30 feet up the wall, he unexpectedly fell. At this point, he had four trad pieces in, but the top two pulled out. He landed on the rock ledge next to me. Because the ledge is downward sloping, I had to keep Reid on belay to keep him from sliding off the ledge. So I called for help.

For the minute or two that I waited for help, I could see Reid spitting and slowly moving his arms and legs. The four other climbers that were nearby were very helpful. We tried to calm him down and stabilize his head. He had a laceration on the back of his head and was bleeding a lot from his left ear. He was very confused and uncooperative. He kept on trying to stand up. While it was not ideal, he was most comfortable in the fetal position with his head in my lap. I applied pressure to the laceration on the back of his head and treated him the best I could for shock. While I was not next to him for the first one to two minutes after the fall, he was conscious and knew his name and my name the entire time. The Nederland Fire Department, Pridemark Paramedics, and Rocky Mountain Rescue safely removed Pletcher from the rock ledge and he was taken by helicopter to St. Anthony's Hospital where he was diagnosed with two skull fractures, brain contusions with a subdural hemorrhage and a wrist contusion. He is expected to make a full recovery after rehabilitation.