



April, 2023

### To Our Boulders Community:

Happy April! This comment response will address feedback we've received in the month of March

As a reminder, comments can be submitted anytime to our [three online comment boxes](#), and to our two physical comment boxes (one in each location). We do our best to respond as frequently as possible in a public forum, and for urgent or easy-to-take-care-of matters, we often fix things on the fly. While we don't address every comment in our public responses, we do try to get the gist of all the comments represented, either through combining comments or addressing a concept more generally. If you have a question about how your comment was (or wasn't) responded to, or the response process in general, feel free to email [community@bouldersgym.com](mailto:community@bouldersgym.com).

We can't thank you enough for contributing to improvement at Boulders. We really appreciate the comments, especially the ones which spark thoughtful internal conversations and engagement with our community. We're happy and privileged to serve each and every one of you.

Sincerely,

**Boulders Climbing Gym**

### General Feedback:

**Comment:** *Rental climbing shoes are atrocious. Not very appealing to customers as they are necessary to climb.*

**Response:** We couldn't have said it better ourselves. We've got some new (and some repaired) shoes on the way, and we apologize for the delay. We've had huge swells in (new) traffic as COVID has waned, which resulted in us miscalculating the speed at which we would run through shoes. Combine that with supply chains that are still recovering from COVID and we've had a tough time getting shoes in quickly. They are on their way, though, and we have waived rental shoe fees in the meantime.

**Comment:** *I love this place!*

**Response:** We love you, too!

**Comment:** *I noticed yesterday that the tablets at the front of the downtown gym didn't have the page to log spring league climbs up yet. It also looks like there is no link to do so on the spring league online page. Are we logging climbs differently this season?*

**Response:** We fixed this as soon as we received this comment. You should be able to log the same way as previous seasons!

**Comment:** *Me and my friend were climbing one evening when there was a kids climbing session going on with an exorbitant amount of kids at the gym (at least 40 if I were to guess). My friend (who is newer to climbing and recently got a membership) wanted to take his belay test however we were told that we would have to wait for a staff member to become available so they could test. There were at least 10 staff members working that night – 1 at the front desk and the rest were working with the kids. Whenever we saw an additional staff member come to the front desk, we went to ask if we could quickly do the belay test which takes less than 5 minutes – each attempt was quickly shot down with “I am working with the kids team right now so I can’t do that”. As a member who pays the full \$90+ a month and so does my friend, it was very disappointing that not one staff member could step away for 5 minutes to test my friend. We had to end up waiting for 2hrs for the kids session to end just to do a quick test.*

*The point I am making is that there should be limits on the number of kids each session allows or not all staff should be allotted for kids climbing. Having all your staff focusing only on the kids climbing sessions does not seem fair to the rest of the paying members. Another thing I would love to have implemented at Boulders is adult-only climbing hours or a time where people only over a certain age can climb at Boulders. I have spoken to many members that feel the same way about these issues.*

*Thank you!*

**Response:** We’re sorry you weren’t able to receive a belay test as quickly as you wanted! Our youth program staff need to stay dedicated to the kids they’re working with while they’re on the clock. This is a safety issue for us- if they were to remove themselves (even briefly), and go give a belay test, they would no longer be able to respond to an emergency with the kiddos should one arise. All our programs are run with thoughtful staffing ratios in mind, so we can’t let program staff tip that ratio by going off to give a belay test or engage with other customers in any way that would take their main attention away from the kids.

That said, we can look into adding an additional desk staff who would be available for things like belay tests during peak times, which would ease this wait time you’re experiencing.

Kids are a valuable part of a healthy community, and have just as much right to take up space in the gym as any adult. We appreciate your patience and kindness as they move through the space. If ever you feel that kids are behaving in a way that is making you feel unsafe or uncomfortable, feel free to let one of their dedicated staff members know. While we won’t be implementing adults-only hours, the kids do come in predictable waves so you can plan your visit around them if you prefer a lower-kid experience. Programs run on weekdays at the east side location from roughly 5-7. Wednesdays are the lightest days in terms of kid usage of the space, and there are almost no children typically before 2 or 3 in the afternoon on any weekday while school is in session.

**Comment:** *More auto belays. Why are they at the top/ not in use? 5.11/ 5.12 on auto belay.*

**Response:** We are required by our auto belay manufacturer to perform routine webbing replacement on all of our auto belays, with webbing made by that manufacturer. Unfortunately, the manufacturer has run into a supply chain snag, so we have our hands tied until they’re able to get us new webbing. We know this is frustrating and we’re sorry not to have an easier answer! Thank you for your patience!

**Comment:** *Make outdoor programs for summer.*

**Response:** That would be fun! We're somewhat limited in this capacity due to our insurance, but please check out the local outdoor climbing opportunities in Madison!

**Comment:** *It would be nice if you periodically moved the auto belay routes, they always seem to be staying on the same few walls.*

**Response:** The auto belays should hopefully all be back in service soon so it shouldn't be as big of an issue, but thank you for the idea and we can look into it!

**Comment:** *this place rocks*

**Response:** you rock!

**Comment:** *"Thank you to the person at the front desk. I was waiting for a tow truck for my car and they let me know I could wait inside and where the bathrooms were. A little kindness helps a hard day"*

**Response:** We're so glad you had a good experience with our front desk staff. We have to agree, they're pretty phenomenal. We hope your car troubles ended up alright!

**Two comments, addressed together:** *#1 More places for parents to sit and work #2 More cubbies in the front please*

**Response:** We passed both of these suggestions on to our facilities manager, and he is looking into solutions! Thank you for them both!

**Comment:** *This place is the best... may there please be a sauna... please???*

**Response:** We too would love a sauna! If it's ever in the budget we'll be sure to jump on the opportunity :)

**Comment:** *Hi, love boulders, love the team and the gyms. Recently I've noticed that the downtown mats are pretty dirty, I would love it if they were vacuumed more frequently. I usually climb first thing in the morning and it would be awesome to come in to clean mats <3  
Thank you*

**Response:** We agree with this! We had some broken vacuum issues that should now be resolved so you should see an improvement in this area. Thank you for the comment and please let us know if this issue persists!

## **Routesetting Feedback:**

**Comment:** *I'd prefer to have routes be tagged again. It's frustrating trying to gradually warm up not knowing the difficulty of routes. Especially when it's crowded, and there's even less room to climb.*

**Response:** All our routes are tagged with color coded cards, except for the very newest set which we leave untagged for just one week in order to let people try things without the preconceived expectations that grades can impart. If you're looking for specific numerical grades, you can find them on the KAYA app. Thanks for the comment!

**Comment:** *Make more (short) people climbs.*

**Response:** Thanks for the feedback! Don't forget to check KAYA and ask staff for beta if you're stuck on a reachy climb. Sometimes (not always) there is a footwork solution that isn't immediately obvious :)

**Comment:** *Wall 20-17 (week of 3/10) routes seem inconsistent with the grading scale.*

**Response:** Thank you for this level of specificity! This was communicated to the setters immediately.

**Comment:** *5.11 / 5.12 on auto belay please :)*

**Response:** Thanks for this suggestion! Because our auto belay space is limited (especially right now), and is the most accessible type of rope climbing, we tend to trend towards the easier grade ranges. Knowing you have this preference is helpful though, and we will keep it in mind.

**Comment:** *Please have partner climbs available year round! My friend and I really enjoyed climbing the partner climb and would want to do more of them!*

**Response:** We're so glad you loved the partner climb and we will keep this in mind!

## **Safe Space Feedback:**

**Comment:** *I noticed the partnership between Boulders and Fontana. It feels important to expand on the mention that the owner is racist. (The person writing this is not the one that shared the comment on insta - I just wanted to give a personal account). During the BLM protests, Fontana was openly supportive of the police and not BLM.*

*"As a person of color, I have been followed around the store by the owner on numerous occasions."*

*I believe this partnership should be reconsidered. I do believe in supporting local -- not supporting racist.*

**Response:** Thank you for this feedback, we really appreciate you taking the time to submit this and let us know about Fontana's impact in the community. As soon as we received this feedback we stopped advertising this partnership in order to take a step back and make an informed decision moving forward. We're in the process of meeting with the new owner of Fontana to pass this feedback along and encourage some reflection within that company. Internally, we are also taking steps to examine our process for creating partnerships to make sure we're aligned on issues of mission and vision.