

Modifying the Anchor Platform

By Cliff and Bezy McKay on CEILIDH

Anchoring is essential for cruising. Pearson equipped our 323 model with an anchor platform and a roller to stow an anchor and deploy it easily. The welded stainless loops over the roller secure it underway. The platform provides an effective way to stow an anchor and to drop it quickly in an emergency. To break out the anchor, you need to move the rode into the chock on the rail. Pearson also provides a large anchor well in the foredeck to hold another anchor and two or more rodes, overall, a fine system for anchoring.

But there are times when even a good system can be improved. We wanted to stow a second anchor on the platform with a roller to deploy it. There are numerous times when you need two anchors to control the way you swing. Or again, it is better to use two anchors in somewhat stronger winds rather than dig the heavier anchor out of the Lazarette, move it forward, find the rode and set it. The easier it is to set two anchors, the more likely you are to do so when the situation is questionable, rather than “lazing out” and then having to scramble to set the second anchor after the crisis is upon you. Actually, the changes we needed to carry a second anchor in a ready position were straight forward.

First, we unbolted the anchor platform and took it to the welder. He welded a second roller on the port side, offset a little aft so that the flukes of the two anchors would not interfere with each other. He welded a loop on top like the other roller. He fashioned a curved plate that bolted to the stem just above the waterline. I checked the location inside the boat to make sure I could get to it to tighten the nuts. He notched a 3/4" stainless rod so it could be attached to the plate on the stem with a clevis pin. He also welded an additional plate underneath the platform tubes to strengthen it. On this plate, he welded the bracket for the other end of the rod. This strengthening allows me to break out the anchors with the rode running over the rollers in ordinary anchoring conditions.

With access to the bow through the chain locker at the forward end of the V-berth, I could reach the nuts that bolted the platform back in position, and I could reach down and tighten the nuts on the new plate on the stem. We designed the supporting rod so that the plate would be 4" above the waterline. I reinstalled the platform, then pinned the rod to the underneath side of the platform in order to get the exact location for the plate on the stem. I marked that plate and then drilled in from the outside. I sealed the bolts with silicone seal. I had three different lengths of bolts on hand. It is maddening to have to stop in the middle of a job like this, head down in the chain locker with a friend in the dinghy on the outside and run to the store to get longer bolts. Had I gotten extra long bolts, more than long enough, they would have crossed those coming from the opposite side because the plate is bent around the stem and the bolts are angling toward each other. It is difficult enough to get the washers and nuts started without having to contend with interference from a bolt from the other side. It's much easier to buy additional bolts..

With the anchor platform re-installed, I spliced a short line to the inboard loop. Spliced in place, the line is handy to secure the anchor as soon as it is raised. I suggest black line to “cooperate with the inevitable” and to by pass the mottled gray stage as a white line becomes black with accumulated mud and dirt. I also secure the shank of the anchor to the tube with a 1/8" line to keep it from banging

around. With this system, anchors that are difficult to stow (Max, Bruce, Delta, CQR) have a secure place and are “at the ready” to be set at a moment’s notice.

