

323 Chainplates

On Friday 13, 2007, I was out sailing on Mobile bay in a nice crisp 15k breeze when all of a sudden my starboard upper shroud gave way. The Chainplate had fatigued right in the joint where the chainplate comes through the deck. I had just done a physical survey of the standing rigging one month before and had looked at the chainplates, bolts etc., as well as rigging from masthead on down. Everything looked fine. The chainplates seemed strong, with no corrosion, and the bolts and turnbuckles looked clean and fit.

What I could not see was inside the joint where the chainplate bar comes through the hull. This afternoon I pulled all three chainplates off on the starboard side and found that also the aft lower chainplate was half way broken at the exact same place. The forward lower seemed to be sound, however it was bent slightly at the head where it comes through the hull. Tomorrow I will pull all the port side chainplates and examine them.

Even though the mast has been stepped several times in her life, the chainplates have never been removed and examined. I would suggest to all 323 owners that if they have not, that they look closely at the structural integrity of the chainplates specifically looking for stress/breakage at the point where the chainplate comes through the deck. At a minimum I would recommend removing the deck plate around the chainplates, but would suggest removing the entire chainplate and checking it more closely.



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"Briar Patch" #210

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