



**Civil Service Channel Sailing Club – Affiliated to the Civil Service Sailing Association**

**CSCSC Ltd Incident Report 26-1**

**The aim is to fill in this form honestly and hopefully prevent further avoidable accidents**

Use hardcopy for immediate record of incident then transfer to softcopy that can be found in the documents area of the CSCSC Ltd website. Completed report to be sent to the Yacht Secretary either directly or via any member of the CSCSC Ltd Management Committee.

<b><u>Name of Person completing the form (not obligatory):</u></b> Skipper		
<b><u>Incident Type:</u></b> Close quarter incident with pontoon pile and a moored motor vessel		
<b><u>Date and Time of Incident:</u></b> 02/04/2026 14:55		
<b><u>Location:</u></b> Mercury Yacht Harbour Entrance to berths 'B' & 'C'	<b><u>Latitude:</u></b>	<b><u>Longitude:</u></b>
<b><u>Weather Conditions:</u></b> Slight N N/E wind F2		
<b><u>Sea State:</u></b> Calm Slight Ebb at the end of the HW stand		
<b><u>Wind Force:</u></b> Slight N N/E wind F2		
<b><u>Natural Light:</u></b> Daylight/Twilight/Night		Clear day light
<b><u>Visibility:</u></b> Very Poor/Poor/Moderate/Good		Very good
<b><u>Tidal Conditions: HW, LW.</u></b> Between HW's		
<b><u>At Location of incident:</u></b>		Pontoon B Mercury Yacht harbour
<b><u>Standard Port:</u></b>		Southampton
<b><u>POB:</u></b>	Qualifications/Experience: Skipper - YMO, Approved Skipper.  Crew 1 - YMC, Approved Skipper. Crew 2 - YMC, Approved Skipper. Crew 3 – YMC, Approved Skipper. Crew 4 – No qualifications.	
<b><u>Names and Details of other Vessel(s)/Installation(s) Involved:</u></b> Pile for Pontoon 'B' Motor Vessel 'Vavara'		



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**Description of Incident (Attach Sketches):**

At the conclusion of a 3 day boat handling course 3 Approved Skippers were practising berthing Sea Essay in its home Berth at C25. Prior to this exercise the helm had practised 'stern to' berthing against the hammerhead, during which the slight ebb tide had been observed and experienced. The final exercise was to reverse Sea Essay between pontoon B&C to give an 'open' approach to berth C25, mooring Sea Essay starboard side to. Two other candidates had just completed the exercise, one of whom had misjudged the proximity of a vessel on pontoon B, requiring the skipper's intervention to recentralise Sea Essay in the channel before berthing.

On this instance Sea Essay had been taken by the candidate out of the channel between B&C pontoons, steered 'up river' into the slight ebb to prepare for reversing back into the channel between the pontoons. Sea Essay was facing upriver and was steered astern, turning through 90° into the channel between pontoons B&C. The turn was not as 'tight' as it could have been, which placed Sea Essay closer to Pontoon 'B' than would have given easy access. The helm appeared conscious of this and continued the turn to bring Sea Essay's stern more to the middle of the channel, but this pivoted the bows closer to the first pile of pontoon 'B'. Alerted to this, the helm eased the throttle, but this took way off Sea Essay, allowing the slight ebb to take it toward the pile and the bows of Motor Vessel 'Vavara', which was moored 'stern to' on Berth B64 next to the pontoon pile. The candidate unsuccessfully attempted to maintain steerage way and, at the same time, a 'Mayday' came over the radio which was an added distraction. I took over control of Sea Easy to regain steerage way. The starboard front fender protected Sea Essay's hull from any contact with the pile and the crew, who were on deck with a roving fender for the exercise, were able to easily and safely hold Sea Essay off the bows of 'Vavara' by holding her pulpit as I manoeuvred Sea Essay back into the middle of the channel for the exercise to resume.

I subsequently went and spoke to the owner of Vavara and his wife who were on board and had been present for the 'incident'. They thanked me for visiting and agreed that there had been no contact between the boats and no damage had occurred.

**Please state why you think the occurrence happened:**

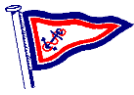
Sea Essay was not placed mid channel to start the exercise and, whilst not crucial, this would have allowed a greater safety margin. It appeared the positioning was being corrected, but the slight ebb - just observed and experienced – was not taken into account in completing the manoeuvre to reverse down the channel.

With the pressure of the situation, possibly exacerbated by the 'May Day' call coming strongly over the radio, the helm appeared to lose awareness of the action required to maintain sufficient steerage way to manoeuvre away from the pile and berthed vessel.

**Sea Essay Crew Injuries:** None

**Other Vessel Crew Injuries:** None

**Damage Suffered to Sea Essay:** None



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**Damage to Other Vessel(s):**

None

**Actions recommended to prevent similar occurrences:**

e.g. Passage Plan and Crew Briefing? Follow a chart/plotter? Keep a proper watch? Monitor Depth displays? Allocation of duties?

Thanks go to the skipper for submitting this full account of a near miss. There are only a few general points to add to his excellent analysis.

This near miss serves as a reminder of the potential for an incident when berthing at MYH. In this case an accident was avoided by the skipper closely monitoring events and taking control, and by having crew members properly positioned and ready to fend off. As highlighted in a number of Skippers Newsletters, most recently in SNL 02-2026, there can be high tidal flows through the marina. Here the tidal flow was not high, but even so a small misjudgement was compounded by it (as well as by the reduction in steerage way). The lessons are clear: plan and brief your approach, including crew actions in the event of deviations from the plan; ensure the yacht is tracking straight down the B/C channel, avoiding a tight turn into the channel; keep steerage way on (but not too fast either!); be very wary of making anything other than small 'down-tide' corrections – some degree of ferry gliding should be maintained; and, finally, if in any doubt about the conditions and your ability to dock safely in them, radio MYH on Ch 80 and agree an alternative temporary berth, preferably on a hammerhead. Finally, boat handling courses and the approved skipper refresh sessions are invaluable for practising and honing skills in a supportive environment.

On querying the reporter, he is content that the individuals involved had learned from the incident and had subsequently demonstrated sound manoeuvring. It is therefore not thought that further training is required.