



Civil Service Channel Sailing Club Ltd

(a Company limited by Guarantee; Company Number 16282044)

Incident investigation report

Panel: Andy Smith, Brian Skelley, Dave Price

Preamble: The panel was formed to investigate the incident below. We wish to record this formal assessment format has not been routine but has been adopted to apply some rigour and consistency into future investigations. We welcome views of the committee on this approach and whether it should be adopted formally. This format is in no way intended to imply greater concern or targeting at this particular skipper.

Summary of Incident:

Date/Time: 15 May 2025, 17:00

Location: Mercury Yacht Harbour, River Hamble

- Incident: Mooring manoeuvre to enter home berth C25, where tide combined with wind gusts caused a collision with boat and pontoon on downstream side of alley. Difficult conditions that were recognised at the time. Novice crew but competent / experienced skipper and mate with knowledge of the mooring and challenges it can present.
- Damage was exacerbated in trying to get off following the collision.
- One person was slightly injured. Damage caused to CSD vessel Sea Essay, another yacht "Murmurer au vent" although initial suspicion of damage to the pontoon was not recovered. Approx value of damage was c. £10k with further losses through cancelled events.

Summary of findings

- Cause of incident: Skipper error on mooring contributed to by strong tides and a gusty but not excessively strong wind. Additional damage was made worse in trying to extract the yacht from the situation. There was an injury due to the sudden stop but luckily not serious and no obvious factor that caused this or could have prevented it (albeit not investigated in detail).
- Contribution to excess by skipper and crew: Previously discussed and rejected due to this being a daysail (not a charter).
- Suspension /revocation of Approved skipper status: No evidence of gross negligence. A sailing incident, misjudgement. No suspension required
- Recommend retraining or assessment: Ditto although note there are so many incidents in these berths we should consider some further advice, potentially at annual familiarisation
- Warning notice against further incidents: There is no history of incidents with this skipper and the sub-committee does not recommend any
- Not using as skipper for CSD operated events: This is a matter for the programme sub-committee but despite the incident there is no clear evidence on competence or attitude that prevents the use of this skipper should the sub-committee wish to do so.

Responsibility

In short, it seems the skipper made an error of judgement around the conditions, faced a badly timed, but not unexpected, gust of wind and misjudged position/speed of the yacht leading to the incident. After the incident made further error in attempting to remove the yacht from the situation.

Multiple skipper newsletters (SNL) describing the challenges and factors to consider when using Sea Essay's home berth in these conditions have been issued. The skipper is fully aware of the issue since he raised it to the committee multiple times in his YH roles and reviewed the draft SNLs.

The skippers helpful and honest report of the incident accepts responsibility.



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Mitigating factors

There was a mooring plan and the ebb tide and gusty wind conditions were properly recognised. The unfortunate timing of a wind gust was a factor in this issue but since this risk could be anticipated in these conditions and the wind speeds (F3) were not excessive, it is not considered by the panel to be a significant mitigating factor.

Findings

The panel recognise that mooring the yacht was feasible and safe in the conditions at the time of mooring, fine margins can apply and an incident such as this could happen to almost any club skipper. Ultimately, it is our finding that the skipper and helm (same person in this case) did not execute the manoeuvre as intended. There were insufficient mitigating factors to remove fault from the skipper for the collision. Our finding is that this was an avoidable incident caused by skipper error.

Penalties

This section considers whether the following penalties are appropriate in this case. This is a list of generic penalties that might be applied to any incident with an assessment for this case. Any imposition of penalties will need to be ratified by a majority vote of a quorate committee.

Penalty	Consideration	Apply/disapply
Cost contribution to the full or partial excess (deposit) as set in the T&Cs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Circumstances suggest fault with charterer / skipper and a penalty is nominally payable. Ordinarily this would be shared by the skipper and crew.• As a CSD day sail it is inappropriate for the skipper/crew to pay. If the club wishes to charge skippers then it is unlikely skippers will volunteer and crew may not take-part.• The panel's opinion is the club should carry this cost	Not payable
Suspension or permanent removal of CSSA skipper approval	<p>Whilst errors were made it is the panels opinion that there is no reasons to question overall competence, capability or attitude. There is no evidence of gross-negligence or of being (medically) unfit to skipper.</p> <p>The skipper's attitude has been exemplary, in reporting and self-assessing this incident and in his approach prior and following the incident. The skipper recognised where improvement could be made and will already have learned lessons</p> <p>This is an unfortunate incident where the impact was high cost and led to an injury but the consequences should not drive a stricter penalty in this section,</p>	No suspension
Recommended retraining or re-assessment	There could be a case for a trainer to run through the mooring processes in these sort of conditions. Potentially to reassess.	Not required



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	Note a potential Lesson to introduce berthing training.	
Warning notice against further incidents	A note is made on club files concerning the incident. If this is considered serious or part of a series of errors there is an option to issue a notice of "no further fault in 2 years" and non-compliance means the club reserves the right to suspend skipper approval. Alternatively, the findings can be discussed with the skipper to ensure lessons have been learned,	No formal notice warning of penalties in the event of further incidents within 2 years. Limit to discussion with Skipper to ensure lessons are learned.
Ban from skippering club events	If there is question around competence or attitude the club may formally prohibit the person from running club events and will also notify CSSA to inform other offshore divisions to they can consider taking similar action if appropriate. In cases of attitude that might also apply to all CSSA clubs.	Not required No evidence of fundamental incompetence or poor attitude

Penalties need to be fair, proportionate and applied consistently and our previous experience and approach for comparable Incidents has set an unhelpful precedent. Also, the idea of removing an excess may not be consistent with the club ethos. This needs a rethink by the committee. I recommend that the committee set out and publish some principle that are appropriate to running a club as a company limited by guarantee and make it clear to everyone this is a reset and will be implemented in the future. Any financial penalty imposed needs to be something people can insure against and I therefore recommend it is a deposit/excess.

Lessons

As such there is no new lesson here.

The factors which make this mooring challenging are well recognised. Despite numerous skippers' newsletters setting out the challenges of mooring with a strong ebb, incidents continue to occur. The skipper has included some personal observations and lessons in his report which are not dissimilar to those in previous skipper newsletters. Experience skippers might have useful insights to share as good practice or techniques that can be considered for certain circumstance.

Actions

We recommend that a further SNL is issued to remind skippers of the hazards when mooring here. However, after multiple SNLs and continued incidents, the panels view is that, on its own, this is insufficient.

We considered some further possible actions, which we remit to the full committee to consider:

- introduce a club ban on mooring at full ebb. We think this is unjustified as there have been many more successful moorings than incidents. Furthermore, a similar scenario can be faced in many other marinas. We feel this should remain the judgement of the skipper, not a club rule.
- Introduction of a security deposit might help focus the attention of skippers. The administration of deposits, verification of no damage and refunds is complex and not in the ethos of the club. However, there has been a proposal around fuel deposits and this could be explored at the risk of removing one of the main benefits of sailing with the club



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- The timing of handovers can encourage skippers to return at less optimal times in respect of tides. Handovers could be adjusted. Our view is this is impractical.
- Whilst skippers are already advised to consider contacting the marina for an alternative berth, this could be pre-planned for those handovers taking place around peak water flow. This could be included in skipper's packs with higher risk dates highlighted
- Short (half day) training course focussed on mooring at MYH in strong tides. This could be mandated for all club skippers. It could be offered for free if mandated. However, with over 100 skippers this is significant investment and takes Sea Essay away from revenue earning work and typically only 10 of these moor at MYH each year.
- Previously the annual familiarisation used to include a half day on the water including practice at mooring in the berth. This could be reintroduced to show standard techniques
- There are some techniques taught or developed by trainers and regular skippers. These could be included on the CSD website. The elements of mooring in large tide flow could be posted as an educational video showing this technique.

Consistent application of club policy

Penalties need to be fair, proportionate and applied consistently. There have been multiple incidents with inconsistent process for handling and different pressures from individual committee members for tough action or light touch. This needs to be formalised into a process and the intention of this report structure is to start setting some principles for potential actions rising from an incident.

Recommendations

Given the time that has passed and that this has been aired with the Skipper already it is recommended that the committee consider these actions and discuss the detailed incident report submitted to the sub-committee by the Skipper. (NB The Skipper in question has undertaken skipper refresher training).