Stern Line System

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I don't know how many of you struggle with a 200' to 300' lump of rope for your stem line, but I finally got tired of fighting with ours and devised a simple way to keep it tidy and ready to deploy at a moments notice.

The key to the system is a surplus rope spool from your friendly chandlery or rigging shop. Ask nicely and they will most likely give you as many as you want! Get a sturdy one, the black plastic ones seem to be a little stronger than the white ones. I would recommend a coat of paint to protect the plastic from UV. Some of them have plywood ends with metal axles and although a little rough looking they are quite strong.

The CS 36T and many other CSs have an opening in the stem pulpit for the swim ladder to nestle into. Get a rope spool that will fit the ladder opening in your pulpit. On our 36T, the swim ladder is locked in the stored position with two pins through the pulpit uprights into the ladder side rails. These pins are another key in the system.

On my prototype, I used a piece of wood dowel (closet rod) for an axle. The hole through the spool, and therefore the axle, should be l¼" or larger in diameter. I would recommend plastic pipe for the axle. Measure the width of the swim ladder opening and drill two holes through the axle separated by that amount. These holes must be the same diameter as your pulpit uprights and must pass through the axle at the same angle. Now cut the axle to length by cutting through these holes so as to leave half of each hole on the ends of the axle (see Figure 1).

Put the axle through the spool, push the swim ladder out of the way, drop the spool between the pulpit uprights and let it rest on the pins. When you're finished with the stem line, store the spool in a locker or under the helmsman's seat. This system has worked well for us for a couple of seasons now. Our spool holds about 300' of 3/8" yellow poly line which was a major hassle to deal with before putting it on the spool.

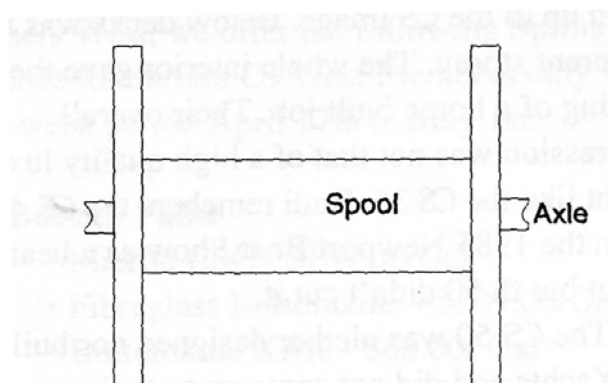Now it is so well behaved I can't believe it's the same line!

Figure 1