

Rigging Tips: The Centerboard Preventer

By Pete Thorn (T-1427)

One day while crewing for ace Lightning skipper Tom Hudgens, I saw on his boat a safety device that really seemed to make a lot of sense: a down and dirty centerboard preventer. This device could probably be used on many small centerboard sailboats, but most especially the Tanzer 16!

Sailors who have never fully capsized (otherwise known as "turning turtle") probably won't have much appreciation for centerboard preventers. (For a more complete description of capsizes, refer to Dave Permar's article in this manual.) The elegant simplicity and incomparable value of this inexpensive bit of rigging is best appreciated by the "fully capsized" sailor sitting on the bottom of his turtled boat, contemplating the thin flat plate centerboard held securely by gravity beyond the sailor's grasp.

A centerboard preventer will "prevent" the board from sliding all the way back into the slot so you can grab it, pull it out to climb on and right the boat. Sailors of the most humble mechanical ability can easily install in this elegant device. The Lightning style preventer (found on Tom Hudgens Lightning and brilliantly copied by the author) costs less than \$5 and takes less than 5 minutes to install.

Just get a piece of 1/4" line about two feet long and a drill to drill two holes through the centerboard trunk cap suitable to pass the line through. The holes should be drilled between the 1st and 2nd forward screw pairs holding the teak wood cap on the trunk. Tie a knot in one end and reeve the line up through the bottom of one hole, around the forward end of the centerboard and down in the other hole. When you are underway, snug the line and tie a slip knot in the loose end. Now the board can't go all the way back in the trunk and will be there sticking out at least a little when you need to grab it. (Just remember when beaching the boat to pull the slipknot and loosen the preventer).

I can't agree with Dave Permar more, "Safe sailing is good sailing!"

