

The Right Anchor

by Capt. Gary P. Joyce

It looked to be a likely spot for fish to hang out, a shoal, a high-speed rip and the chart promised rocky bottom just inside the shoal. I drop the hook — a Danforth-style — and head aft to get ready to drop the other kind of hook, but ... hmmm. I don't think the anchor set. After taking a look at some reference points ashore, it appears that the anchor isn't grabbing. Maybe I need to let out some more scope. Wait a few beats and ... hmmm. That's not working either, and now I'm not exactly where I want to be. Okay, let's try this again.

I pull the anchor and wipe some eelgrass off the flukes, power back to where I wanted to be in the first place, throw the anchor out and let out a ton of scope. Still doesn't seem to be grabbing. Now what have I done wrong so far?

Well, I was okay when I first decided on anchoring up, but from there on things went down hill. First hint should have been the eelgrass. If you're pulling up grass, chances are the bottom style isn't exactly what a Danforth-type anchor was designed for. A Danforth holds best in sand or land-like mud; they will also hold in rock, but as any diver can tell you, they'll hold but won't necessarily release. But they're not designed to hold in slick underwater foliage of any kind. There's also the problem — not mentioned, but probably obvious to any boat



owner — that I used the Danforth again, even though I *had* recognized the bottom material because you *know* I didn't have any other style anchor aboard.

Then there was the throwing the anchor bit, a sure sign of a landlubber. Heaving your anchor isn't helping anything and is simply a waste of energy and possibly dangerous as well. ("There's no

way the line will get wrapped around my leg!" Well, duh, yes, there is.) Just drop the anchor overboard and leave the shot put muscles for when you're pulling it up or — should you have a larger boat — when your much abused and neglected windlass heads south, or start training for the shot put.

Anchors

Saying "anchor" is like saying "car;" both words describe something, but within are a spectrum of styles, manufacturers, intended usages and costs.

The most common anchor is the Danforth-style, named after its inventor, Richard Danforth. The anchor was invented in 1938 and used successfully during World War II as a means of kedging landing craft off the beach. It is considered a lightweight, burying anchor and is the most common anchor you'll see on boats. It comes in various

sizes for various-sized boats and is made by several manufacturers under a variety of names; Danforth is a trade name. And speaking of kedging: a kedge is a type of anchor too. It's the one that looks like the kind Popeye has tattooed on his arm. "Kedging" means pulling your boat off a shoal by

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