

"I swear, we didn't do anything, it just broke!"

by Dennis Chevront

Cat Trix

By John McDaniel

ARE YOUR HARKEN traveler cars and blocks running as smoothly as they did when they were new? If not, they probably need a good scrubbing.

Each year at the many Nationals I have noticed, as I do at all other regattas, traveler cars skidding, not sailing across the harken track. I also see rim cleats and blocks not working as smoothly as they should. People try different types of oil based lubricants without much success. If an oil-based lubricant is used, the crew works worse than before it was lubed in a very short time. It turns out the maintenance on Harken products is very simple and very cost effective. (Translated...very cheap).

BLOCKS AND CUM CLEATS

Harken blocks use Teflon® and Delrin® bearings (types of plastic polymer) which require minimal maintenance. These bearings work best when they are clean and free of dirt and oil. To ensure optimum performance, periodically flush your blocks with fresh water. A good time to do this is after scrubbing the hull, making sure that any loose dirt or extra soap is flushed out of the blocks.

Thoroughly clean and inspect your blocks at least once a year (at launch). Take loose blocks off the boat flush the bearings with WD 40 for 175-176 remove salt and dirt deposits. Soak blocks in a bucket of liquid detergent and fresh water to remove the penetrating lubricant. Thoroughly rinse with fresh water. Although lubricants that do not attract dirt, such as dry lubric or dry silicon sprays. Never lubricate Harken blocks with grease.

Inspect your blocks for damage. In particular, check the shackles for elongation and visible post for cracks and stress corrosion. Replace any hardware with Harken parts to maintain the correct working load. The black plastic side plates on harken blocks are UV stabilized.

However, after extensive exposure to sun, they may develop a gray "chalk like" film on their surface. This discoloration may be removed using a Scotch Brite pad with Amvoro-All. It is highly corrosive aluminum, discoloration

may occur around the rivets and fasteners. This may be removed with a metal polisher such as Duro's Havel Jolly.

TRAVELER CARS

Maintain your main traveler car and self tacking jib car, the same way you do your Tackle blocks. Periodically, take a small plastic bottle full of soapy water and wipe the bearings through the slots on top and bottom. Make sure to move the car back and forth so all the bearings are cleaned. Flush with fresh water. Use a fine Scotch Brite pad with soap to clean the track. Inspect the shackles and control blocks for signs of fatigue. Be sure that every installation includes Harken track and stops. Arrange control shackles so that cars don't hit the end stops under load, but are stopped by the traveler line.

Once a year (at launch) remove the traveler car from the track for a thorough cleaning and inspection. Make sure you have a car loader when you do that. Empty the bearings into a container. Inspect the hulls and cut and clean with WD 40 for 175-176. Look for the spots or cracks in the hulls. Inspect traveler car endcaps for any cracks or damage. Replace if necessary.

Remember, if you sail for fun or sail to win, basic maintenance is important. It takes little time and saves hours of frustration and equipment breakdowns.

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I recently had a chance to use my new Roleez on a large boat with soft "copper soot". It was incredibly easy to move my catamaran and all the gear. As far as I can guess, the only reason someone doesn't use Roleez is because they have not tried them. Thanks for a great product!

George C. King, Philadelphia, PA



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January/February 1997