



## Chesapeake Tartan 30 Association

### COCKPIT COAMING BOX\*

**Q:** On the topic of upgrades, do you know of anyone who has installed coaming boxes in the cockpit area. There looks to be enough room under the winch. We are always looking for more space to store stuff. If not experience, do you have an opinion about the wisdom of such an idea? Bill Keegan, T-30 #443, *Cottonwood*.

**A:** Coaming boxes are mounted through the inside of the cockpit coaming under the winch base. The only such coaming box I've ever seen on a T-30 is on my boat. Years ago, when we decided to get more serious about racing, we bought a spinnaker. To handle the spinnaker sheets, we moved our original Barient 21s aft on the winch base, and installed new Barient 22s forward, where the 21s had been. On the port side, this installation was difficult but possible; one access port through the interior liner was already present under the forward winch, and I cut a similar one further aft under the spinnaker sheet winch. On the starboard side, access to the bottom of the winch base was impossible, because we have the aft-galley model with the ice box extending back under the starboard cockpit seat.

My solution was to install a cockpit coaming box on the starboard side. This required cutting a large hole through the fiberglass coaming, which also provided good access to the bottom of the winch base so the winches could be installed as described above. Our coaming box is molded fiberglass with a teak frame; I haven't seen one exactly like this in stores or catalogs lately, but similar plastic ones are still sold.

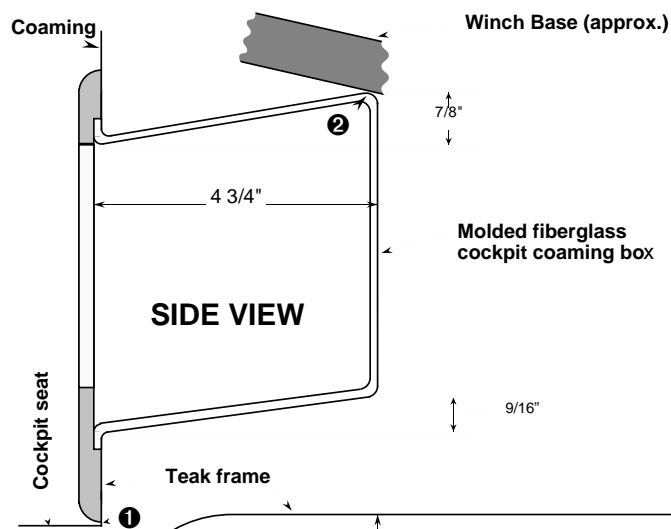
If you decide to put one in, try not to buy too big a coaming box to start with. The real problem is (a) the winch base slopes *down* as you move outboard, while (b) the coaming box slopes *up*, so that it will drain into the cockpit instead of holding a pool of water (when the boat's not heeling). The accompanying figure illustrates the tightness of the space you have to work with. If my box had been any larger, it wouldn't have fit, and I would have had a big hole through my coaming with nothing to fill it up.

I recommend that you personally measure any coaming box before you buy it; the dimensions in catalogs are not clear (where is the height *measured*?). And before you start cutting fiberglass, think through what you will do if the box won't fit. E.g., could you cut and modify the coaming box, or should you abandon it and custom fabricate another box to fit?

When you start the installation, measure *very* carefully, and repeatedly, and cut into your coaming slowly. I suggest you start roughly in the center of the planned cutout with a hole saw perhaps 1¼ inches diameter, then expand the hole very carefully using a small hand saw with fine teeth. The space inside the winch base isn't as large as it looks from the outside, and it slopes away pretty fast as you move outboard. I thought I had plenty of space for my box, but it just *barely* fit. Be patient. Brad Armendt, T-30 #282, *Emprise*.

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\* Originally published in *The Hook*, newsletter of the Chesapeake Tartan 30 Association.



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*Approximate* dimensions of the coaming box installed on hull #282.

Note that the teak frame essentially touches the cockpit seat at the bottom (point ❶), while the upper inside corner of the box touches the bottom of the winch base (point ❷).

