

can be hooked if you leave the teasers out and make a big turn around the hooked fish. I think a lot of guys miss catching additional fish when they are in such a hurry to clear their gear and get on a fish that is already well clear of the pattern.



Dave Brackmann
CALIENTE
Cabo San Lucas,
Mexico

Q: I thoroughly enjoyed the article "Midnight Madness" in the September-October 2002 issue, but have a few questions about how to anchor in water 100 fathoms deep. What type of anchor is used? What weight? What length of chain? What is the bottom like? I presume it is not soft or sandy. Do you tie the anchor, and release it when you leave? If so how many and what form of ties?

John Burville
Pembroke, Bermuda

A: I could probably write a whole article about anchoring in the canyon, but there are only a few things that really make a difference in successfully deploying this method. First of all, you should acquire an oversized anchor for your boat. On the 48-foot CANYON RUNNER we use a 42-pound, high-tensile Danforth anchor. The high-tensile anchor is a "must have" as it cuts deeper into the bottom, holds better, and rarely bends. We also use a minimum of 30 feet of 5/8-inch anchor chain. The bottom is mostly semi-hard mud so you hold very well once you get the anchor and chain on the bottom. Most

This large anchor ball attached to an extra large snap via 3 feet of 3/4-inch rope enables the CANYON RUNNER crew to know where the anchor lies on the bottom at all times. Simply snap the ball the anchor line and drop it over the rail.

people go wrong, however, when the anchor is on its way to the bottom.

The key to successfully setting the hook in 100 fathoms is letting the anchor and chain drop slowly to the bottom. If you drop it too fast, the chain sinks faster than the anchor and wraps around it. Obviously, you will never hold with the chain fouled on the anchor. Valuable fishing time will be wasted pulling in the anchor and re-setting. Instead, be vigilant to let the anchor line slowly slide out of your hands, stopping its decent every so often to ensure the anchor is falling first, dragging the chain down with it. In addition, it is always a good idea to have the captain keep the bow into the wind, bumping the engines in and out of gear,



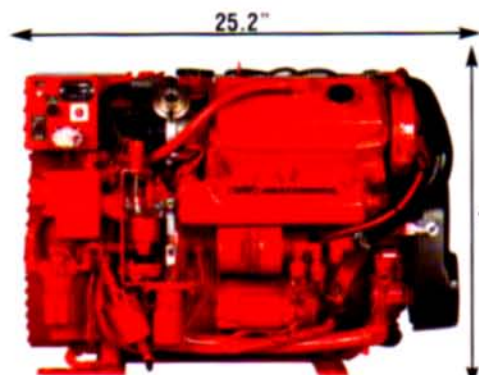
not letting the boat drift back too far from where you originally dropped the hook. Dropping to depths of 600 to 800 feet slowly can take three or four minutes, and with a stiff breeze and ripping current you could end up dragging the anchor off the edge into the deep or up on the flats before the iron eventually hits bottom.



Chris Robinson

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Another area where many people go wrong is by simply not bringing enough anchor line. Anchoring in 100 fathoms requires a minimum of 1,800 feet of anchor line, with 2,400 feet being ideal. Standard practice is to deploy anchor line at an amount equal to three times the depth of the water: 1,800 feet of line in 600 feet of water. If it is rough you will need a lot more scope. In these situations we usually move up on the edge and drop in 300 to 400 feet letting all 2,400 feet out (a 6:1 ratio of line to depth). When the wind is howling at 30 knots and the seas are crashing in the cockpit whilst on anchor you will appreciate the extra security provided by this excess scope. On a calm night, however, we have anchored in 900 feet with only 1,800 feet of line (only a 2:1 ratio) and this has proven more than enough. The only problem is when the wind starts blowing you will never hold with this little scope.

I strongly believe one of the reasons we have been so successful chunking at night in the canyons is that we are not opposed to picking up and moving in the middle of the night if we are not in a hot bite area. Rarely do we ever end up finishing a night in the same place we started. The fact that we have 2,000 feet of anchor line in the water does not impinge on our decision to pull 'em up and head to another area. The only downside is you will lose a lot of time if you do not master the technique of pulling the anchor with an anchor ball. Still, it is always better to put in a few hours at a productive area than all night on the "shut-out" grounds. So don't let the loss of an hour of fishing time influence your decision to get up and move in the dark of night.

On the upside, once you get a handle on pulling the anchor with the ball, the amount of time lost moving should be negligible. Under time pressure we have pulled 2,000 feet in 10 minutes in the dark when our buddies were into a mad-dog bite and we were invited over for the party. However, this was after years of practice and you should take your time using this technique as I have seen things go terribly wrong when not properly executed.

The most important thing you will need to know is exactly where your anchor actually lies on the bottom.

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Mark this position as soon as the anchor goes in the water. All the material you will need to deploy this method is a very large anchor ball with 3 feet of 3/4-inch rope spliced onto a extremely large snap. Snap the ball onto the anchor line and drop it over. If you have a chart plotter with the anchor marked on it the rest is easy, but let's assume you don't. As such, the first thing you need to do before putting the boat in gear is make a mental note where the anchor is and picture a line from where the boat is to the anchor. Use this line as your "reference line" and make a note of your compass bearing.

To retrieve the anchor, first ease the boat forward, taking a 45-degree angle away from the imaginary reference line. As you move forward and away from this reference line you can begin to decrease the angle of your heading to a point that when the boat's position is even with where the anchor was dropped, you are now headed parallel to your reference line. At this point you should also be about half the distance off to the side of the anchor from the amount of line originally deployed. In other words, if you let out 2,000 feet when you dropped the anchor, you should now be about 1,000 feet directly off to the side of the anchor. Obviously, there will be a big loop in the anchor line and the ball will have slid first to the side when you are taking a 45-degree angle, then just off the stern beam as you bring your angle more parallel to the reference line.

Proceeding forward (upcurrent of the anchor), begin to bring the boat back towards your reference line. Once back on the reference line you should be proceeding forward at the exact heading you noted while still at anchor. The anchor line should now be running right alongside your vessel and the ball will be directly astern. You should have someone guide the anchor line away from any obstruction it might foul. At this point the anchor ball will start to lift the anchor out of the mud and up—you will know this by watching the ball. The anchor ball spends most of the time being dragged through the water, and once it starts to actually lift the anchor, the forward motion of the ball stops as

the anchor line slides through the ring, even though the vessel itself has yet to cease its forward motion. When the anchor finally reaches the ring, the chain should slide right through and the anchor will hang on the ring as you back your vessel up and retrieve the line.

As noted, this process can be disastrous if you don't follow these procedures closely. To be specific, I have seen anchor ropes caught in a boat's running gear as it tried to move forward on the anchor at a tighter angle than should have been attempted. Trying this technique at night without the use of a plotter provides added difficulties as many people quickly lose their bearings in the dark. I strongly suggest trying this technique with someone who has done it before or practice it during the day in shallow water (i.e., 50 feet) before trying it on the edge. Because after being pitched a shut out for the last 18 hours, when you get the call at 3 a.m. that your buddies are hand-feeding the yellowfin in their slick with three on at a time, you will want to get there quickly. An inexperienced, overtired, and extremely excited crew does not make for cool heads and good decisions. Pulling the anchor under these conditions could be problematic at best and disastrous at worst—that is until you develop a knack for it.



— Adam LaRosa
CANYON RUNNER
Point Pleasant, NJ
www.canyonrunner.com

Q: I was introduced to chunking a couple of years ago and I find it to be a fascinating technique. I have found it to be best when I use one of those expensive circle hooks with the ball bearing swivel brazed to the eye as it keeps the bait from spinning up my line when I retrieve the bait. My question is this: Sometimes, even with the ball bearing swivel, my line gets all twisted up anyway. What am I doing wrong?

Brian Hovermale
Anaheim, CA