Close Quarters Motoring

Mastering the idiosyncrasies of the motor, the boat, and steerage defines close quarters motoring.

On the White Board:

- Draw an overhead of the boat and the position of the motor. Show how the offset of the motor produces a turning effect *before* the rudder bites and steerage is gained. This is experienced in both forward and reverse.
- Compensating for this known turning effect can be done two ways:
    - The motor should be turned to aim straight at the keel when deployed. This should be checked, because it can come out of alignment. This reduces turning by reducing the lever arm effect of the offset motor. Ask a manager for help before repositioning the motor.
    - Expecting the turn to happen means you can predict and compensate for it.

On the Water:

- Check the motor alignment.
- Discuss the plan for steering before leaving. Make sure to account for wind as well. The wind will affect the bow more than the stern because there is less lateral resistance in the bow.
- Prop walk can be an issue, and is reduced by using lower rpm's.
- Practice driving on and off the dock in both forward and reverse.
    - A big boat maneuvering rule is that you never change from reverse to forward or forward to reverse after having entered close quarters. Changing direction means the boat must first stop, then gain speed in the opposite direction *before the rudder has any effect.* During this period of no control, the wind and current will be pushing you. If this means that you reverse in from outside the basin or reverse out of the basin from the slip, then so be it. Backing down an entire fairway is not intuitive, but makes the process so much easier.

- Sometimes sculling can be used to great effect, since you can push the stern to the side by sculling sideways. HOWEVER, accounting for two different vectors of push (one from the rudder, one from the motor) is more advanced and should not be taught lightly; it can easily make a situation worse by adding to the confusion.