

STRESS AND DEFORMATION ANALYSIS OF A MODULAR FLOATING DOCK WITH A 5000-TON LIFTING CAPACITY

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the global structural behaviour of a modular floating dock with a 5000-ton lifting capacity. Using the finite element method (FEM), the research assesses stress and deformation responses under different operational conditions-lightship, ballasted, and full-load, both in calm water and under wave loads. Identifying the vessel's critical stress concentration zones, the study effectively evaluated these areas, providing targeted recommendations to optimize the vessel's structure and improve its operational reliability.

Keywords: floating dock, finite element analysis, scantling, global analysis

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper focuses on the global structural behaviour of a floating dock with a 5000-ton lifting capacity under realistic operational conditions. The dock is subjected to loads corresponding to real operating conditions: the lightship condition, the ballasted (immersion) condition, and the full-load condition, both in calm water and under equivalent design wave loads. The study follows these steps:

1. Determination of main dimensions and lifting capacity.
2. Structural scantling based on Bureau Veritas classification rules (NR217 [3] and NR612 [4]).
3. Development of structural and tank arrangement plans.
4. 3D CAD and FE model using Simcenter Femap [2].
5. Load application and evaluation of stresses and deformations.

2. 5000-TON LIFTING CAPACITY MODULAR DOCK GENERAL DESCRIPTION

A global structural analysis is conducted for a 5000-ton lifting capacity modular dock, with the main dimensions listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Main characteristics

L_{OA} [m]	99.98
L_{WL} [m]	99.98
B [m]	32.00
B_V [m]	26.00
D [m]	12.25
T_F [m]	2.40
T_B [m]	10.25
T_V [m]	8.25
C [t]	5000

The dock is classed under Bureau Veritas notation:

I \boxtimes *HULL 5 FLOATING DOCK/LIFTING CAPACITY (5000 tons)/MODULAR/HS ≤ 1.2 .*

3. DETERMINATION OF MAIN DIMENSIONS AND LIFTING CAPACITY

3.1 Lifting capacity

To calculate the lifting capacity and the freeboard, the dock was modeled as ten idealized modules. The volumes of the tanks within each module were computed according to the dimensions shown in Figure 1, followed by the calculation of parameter J to ensure the minimum freeboard in accordance with the requirements of the Bureau Veritas classification society.

For the immersion case, the minimum freeboard required by the regulations is one meter. After the calculations, assuming a maximum dock height of 11.25 meters, the total displacement of the dock at maximum immersion is 13541.25 tons. Considering the estimated structural mass of the dock at 2,300

tons, the required ballast for this condition is 11241 tons. Figure 2 illustrates the variation of displacement as a function of draft.

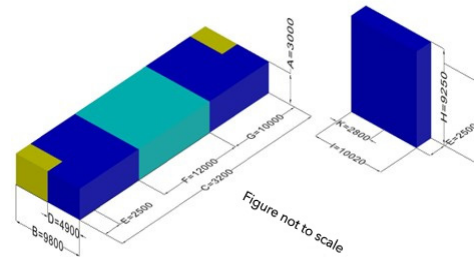


Figure 1. Module dimensions

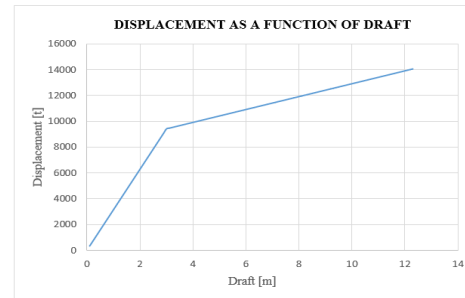


Figure 2. Displacement as a function of draft

3.2 Structure scantling

For the scantling process, the Bureau Veritas classification society's software, *MARS Inland* [5], was used. Based on this program, the minimum dimensions of the structural elements (S235 steel) were determined, deck plating: 15 mm with HP280x11 stiffeners, bottom plating: 13mm with HP180x8 stiffeners, side plating: 10-13 mm with HP160x8-220x10 stiffeners, module connections: 25mm plates with HP220x10 stiffeners, as illustrated in Figures 3-5, ensuring compliance with the minimum strength criteria specified in the classification society's regulations, as presented in Figure 6.

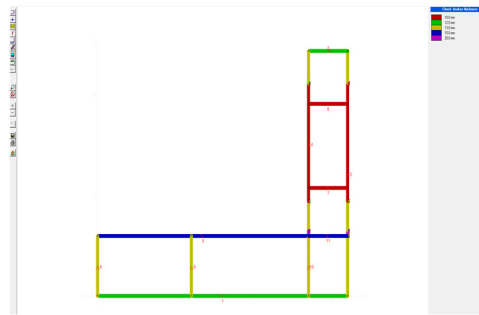


Figure 3. Strakes thickness

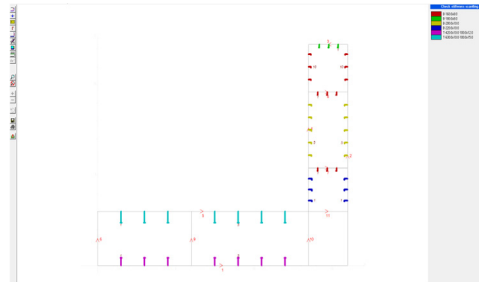


Figure 4. Longitudinal stiffeners scantling

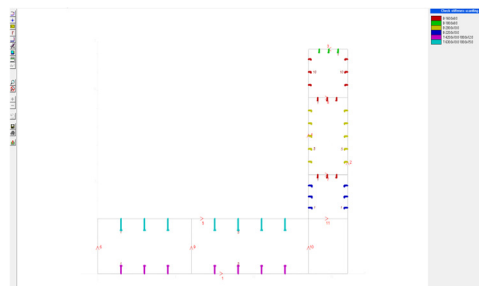


Figure 5. Transverse stiffeners scantling

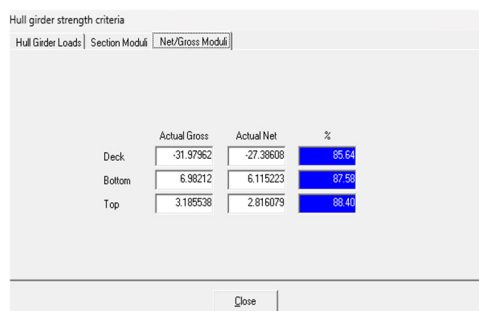


Figure 6. Hull girder strength criteria

3.3 Structural, tank, and keel blocks arrangement plans

Based on the scantling results and the module geometry, the structural (Figure 7-12), tank (Figure 13-15), and keel blocks arrangement (Figure 16) plans [1] were developed.

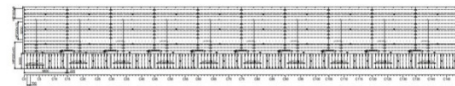


Figure 7. Longitudinal section at shell level

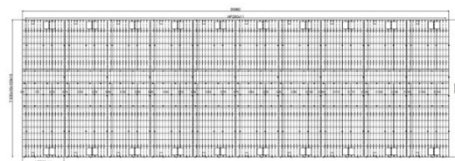


Figure 8. Main deck

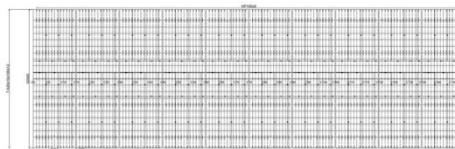


Figure 9. Bottom

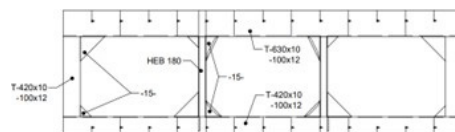


Figure 10. Typical longitudinal section

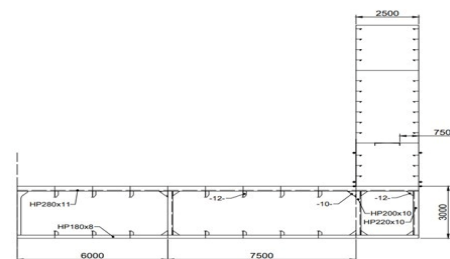


Figure 11. Typical frame

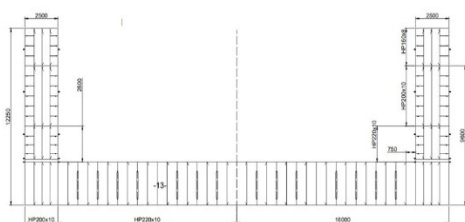


Figure 12. Web frame

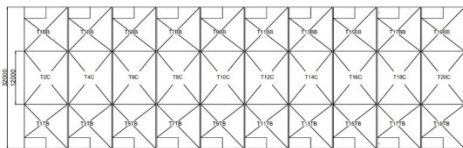


Figure 13. Tank top



Figure 14. Longitudinal section at shell level

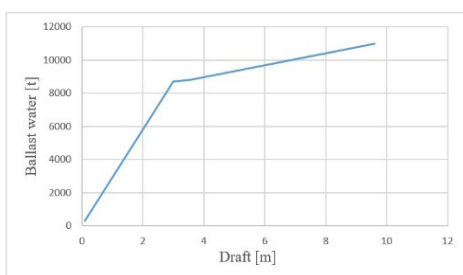


Figure 15. Water ballast tank capacity as function of draft

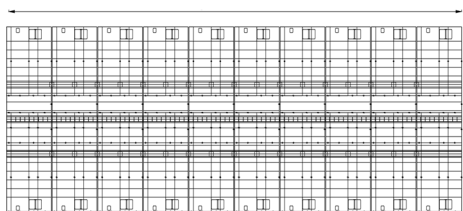


Figure 16. Keel block arrangement

3.4 Geometric modeling and mesh generation

The dock structure was idealized, and the CAD (Figure 17, 18) and FE (Figure 19-21) were modeled in Simcenter Femap [2] software. The structure consists of 10 modular units. The double bottom is transversely stiffened, while the double sides are longitudinal stiffened to provide bending and torsional resistance.

The FE model includes approximately **1.78 million elements** and **1.72 million nodes** (2D QUAD (PLATE)) elements [6].

Boundary conditions follow IACS [7] recommendations, constraining translations along specific nodes in the bow and stern to prevent rigid body motion as listed in Figure 22.

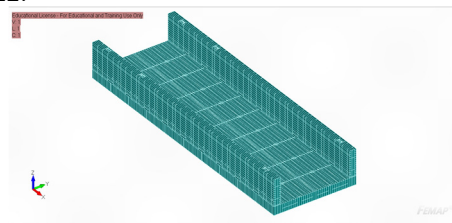


Figure 17

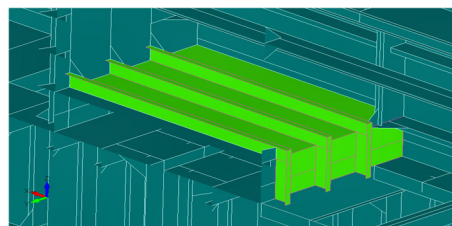


Figure 18

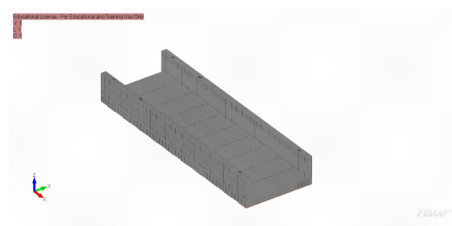


Figure 19

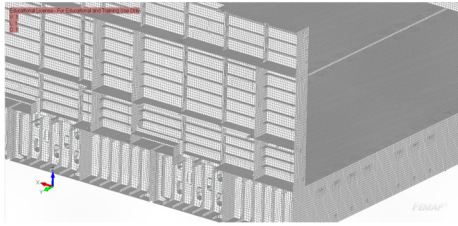


Figure 20

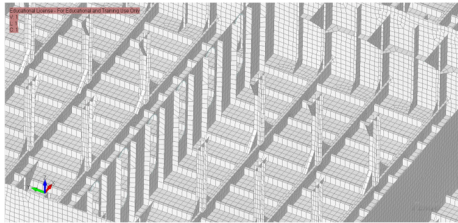


Figure 21

Location		Direction	Type
Aft	Center line	T_x, T_y, T_z	Translation
	Portside	T_z	Translation
	Starboard	T_z	Translation

Figure 22. Constraints

4 Analysis

The dock was analyzed under three operational states:

1. Lightship condition (Figure 25) – minimal draft (0.745 m), calm water, and design wave loads.
 2. Ballasted condition (Figure 26) – complete immersion (10.25 m draft), accounting for hydrostatic pressure/design wave loads and ballast water weight (Figure 23).
 3. Full-load condition (Figure 27) – lifting a 5000-ton vessel (2.4 m draft, Figure 24), hydrostatic pressure/design wave loads.
- Wave loads correspond to an equivalent design wave of 1.2 m significant height.

The steel used in the analysis has a yield strength of 235 MPa, with an allowable limit (safety factor 0.75) of 176 MPa.

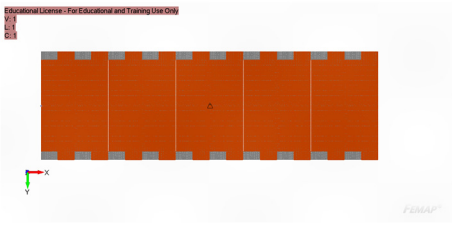


Figure 23. Ballast water mass distribution on bottom plating

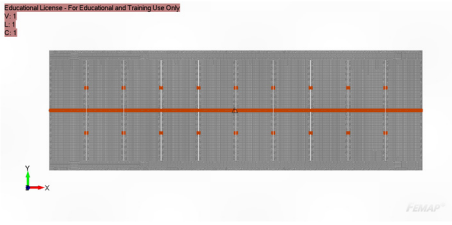


Figure 24. Lifted vessel mass distribution on keel blocks

Lightship			
Case	Plate Top VonMises Stress [MPa]	Deformation [mm]	Safety limit [MPa]
Calm water	125.81	10.333	176
Hogging	235	66.509	176
Sagging	235	45.989	176

Figure 25

Ballast			
Case	Plate Top VonMises Stress [MPa]	Deformation [mm]	Safety limit [MPa]
Calm water	235	41.524	176
Hogging	235	38.844	176
Sagging	235	44.788	176

Figure 26

Full-load			
Case	Plate Top VonMises Stress [MPa]	Deformation [mm]	Safety limit [MPa]
Calm water	235	34.743	176
Hogging	235	84.801	176
Sagging	235	33.474	176

Figure 27

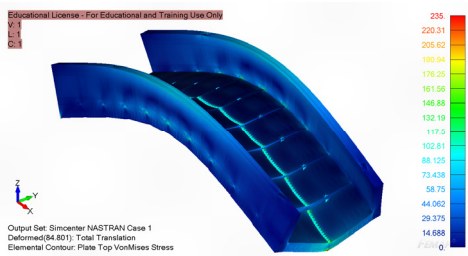


Figure 28

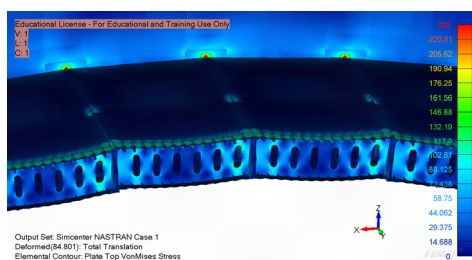


Figure 29

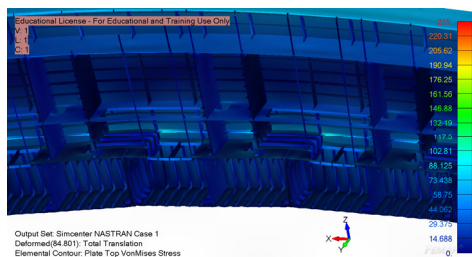


Figure 30

Maximum stresses occur near module coupling joints and longitudinal center supports as shown in Figures 25-30. Stress levels exceeding the allowable limit suggest local reinforcement is required/upgrading the steel grade to S355.

5 Concluding remarks

This study confirms that the modular floating dock meets the Bureau Veritas standards for inland and harbor use. The dock maintains structural integrity under normal operating loads, with critical stress concentrations exceeding 235MPa localized at the module connections. Reinforcing these areas, increasing plate thickness or employing higher-grade steel significantly enhances safety and durability.

REFERENCES

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- [4] Bureau Veritas, *Rules for Classification of Harbour Equipment (NR612)*.
- [5] Bureau Veritas, *Mars Inland*.
- [6] Domnisoru, L. *Finite Element Method in Naval Construction – Lecture Notes*.
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Paper received on November 17th, 2025