

Yacht sets new record — before the race begins

Yachting Reporter

A SAILING record has been set for the Durban to Cape Town voyage — and that was just in the course of getting to a race venue!

Durban yacht Goblet seems set to cause a few upsets in the Rothmans Week regatta next week after smashing the record in her class for the 1100 mile trip from the Royal Natal Yacht Club to the Royal Cape Yacht Club.

The 12m L36 had a five-knot current in her favour most of the way, but the winds, south-south-west from Durban to Cape Agulhas and south-south-east from Agulhas to Cape Town, were not very favourable, said skipper Brian Tocknell.

"We left at 2.30pm on December 1 from Royal Natal and arrived here on Tuesday at 8.30am — that gives us a time of four days, 17 hours and 30 minutes," he said.

"It took us 36 hours to get from Durban to East London, which is two hours short of our best for that stretch in the Vasco da Gama race.

"From East London to Port Elizabeth it took us 14 hours."

According to owner and crewman John Puttergill, the leg from Cape

Agulhas to Cape Town provided the biggest seas and strongest wind.

"The wind was about 70 knots," he said.

"We could have been even quicker had it not been for the fact that a big trawler made us take a 10-mile detour near Agulhas."

Goblet encountered the trawler off Cape Agulhas at night and even though it did not have its trawling lights on, they thought it was dragging nets, because it could not manoeuvre very well and was making a slow speed.

The vessel bore down on them and Puttergill had to set off a hand-held flare to warn it off.

"That ship was big, and it passed about 100m away from us," said skipper Tocknell.

"It forced us to retrace our course for about five miles as we tried to avoid it."

Goblet has had great success in the Natal sailing season. She was class and overall winner on handicap in the Vasco da Gama race and was unbeaten on Performance Handicap Rating Factor (PHRF) all season.