

Sponsor for solo yacht race

Staff Reporter

THE Singlehanded South Atlantic race (Southstar) from Cape Town around the island of St Helena and back in February this year will be sponsored by Stannic.

The race, the world's first long-distance match-racing event over such a distance in mid-ocean, will be sailed in Miura class yachts and the event brings Stannic back to yachting after several years sponsoring the Admiral's Trophy match-racing between Miura class yachts in Table Bay.

The race, which was originally planned as a singlehanded ocean crossing from Hout Bay to Punta Del Este in Uruguay, was recently cancelled due to political pressure.

It is hoped the new event, which will end in Cape Town after the yachts have rounded the mid-Atlantic Ocean island, better known as home of Napoleon, who spent his last days there in exile, will be the first of many races.

A spokesman for the organisers yesterday said that although there were only four entries in the first race it was heartening to see that two of the entrants were men who had sailed singlehanded around the world before.

The entrant from Britain, Paul Rodgers, made the circumnavigation in his steel yacht Spirit of Pentax and South Africa's Bertie Reed sailed the yacht Altech Vooortrekkër into second place in the last BOC singlehanded round the world race.

Bertie Reed was beaten only by the ultra-modern hi-tech yacht Credit Agricole which had been specially designed to win the 1982-83 race.

Currently Reed is busy doing the required 500-mile qualifying voyage in his yacht Seaboard Energy and is expected back in Cape Town at the weekend.

The other entrants are Tony Abbot and Ian Duncan, both from Cape Town, the spokesman said.

The course to St Helena is 1 700 miles and the return voyage, depending on the route taken, is expected to be in the region of 2 000 nautical miles.

The race will be sailed under the umbrella of the Cruising Association of South Africa.