

Australia IV left high and dry after disqualification

FREMANTLE — Australia IV was yesterday disqualified from its victory over Kookaburra III, leaving its place in the America's Cup defender final hanging on yet another international yachting jury decision.

The jury ruled yester-

day that Australia IV skipper Colin Beashel was in the wrong in a collision with Kookaburra III in their race on Tuesday which concluded the defender semi-finals.

If the panel now decides to allow a rehearing of a protest from Kookaburra II over its defeat by Australia IV on Tuesday and then rules in Kookaburra's favour, the best-of-nine race defender final would become an all-Kookaburra affair.

Yesterday's jury decision transfers six points to Kookaburra III which lost the race by 24 seconds after it took in water through a gash in its bow.

Kookaburra III now tops the standings with 83 points against Australia IV's 77 and Kookaburra II on 70.

However, the jury was still mulling over whether

to reopen the protest from Kookaburra II over Australia IV's use of an unusual balloon-like headsail.

Kookaburra II protested after the race and the jury debated for seven hours before rejecting it. But the Taskforce '87 syndicate which runs the pair of Kookaburras wants the protest reopened on the basis that the methods used to fly the sail were illegal.

If a rehearing were granted and the protest upheld Australia IV would lose another six points to Kookaburra II and Alan Bond's yacht would lose its place in the defender semi-final next week.

The jury adjourned late yesterday and said it would reconvene this evening to consider Kookaburra II's application. — Sapa-Reuter.