

Post Correspondent

ABOARD THE SAS DRAKENSBERG — The Thunderchild crew had to fight an electrical fire on board their yacht during the Rothmans Cape to Rio race.

The 12th yacht to slip into Rio, the crew relayed details of their firefighting which, if it had failed, would have had disastrous consequences.

The fire was thought to have started after the yacht's batteries short-circuited below decks.

Skipper Rhett Goldswain said the fire "was so quick that we didn't even have

Rio race yacht survives fire

time to grab a ratpack, life raft or our ERFB (emergency position recording beacon)".

"One by one we fought our way below decks to try and prise open the molten cables and extinguish the fire. Luckily we succeeded."

Argonaut and Canon narrowly missed colliding with each other by a few boat-lengths last week as they negotiated an oil field off South America pock-

marked by about 15 rigs.

Lady Lorna 2, co-skippered by Gary Farrow and Pat Holloway, was poised to snatch sixth place handicap from Dave Abromowitz's IGI Sea Rescue, and become the first sub 40-footer in the fleet to finish.

Under the circumstances Lady Lorna has sailed a brilliant race, considering that the race was sailed in winds which distinctively favoured the leading maxis

who have clinched the premier handicap positions.

The exception is the 15m Morning Glory which is 99% percent certain of winning the Gold South Atlantic Trophy.

With sea horses once again rising to welcome the yachts closer to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil's Carrefour skipper Torben Grael warned the fleet of complacency.

"The mountain influence off the coast can cause the

winds to die down very suddenly and the yachtsmen shouldn't relax so close to the finish."

●Cape Town yachtsman Noel Mallinson was suffering a knee infection.

SAS Drakensberg doctor Major Gerhard van Niekerk advised the crew how to treat the knee.

●The only landmark in the Cape-to-Rio race appears at first to be an inhospitable lump of rock rising from the Atlantic Ocean.