

# Whitbread fleet won't forget Kiwi send-off

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SOME 6 000 spectator craft and 300 000 people along the shores around Auckland, New Zealand, bade the Whitbread round-the-world race fleet bon voyage on Sunday at the start of the 5 195-mile fourth leg into Southern Ocean iceberg territory towards the notorious Cape Horn and Punta del Este, Uruguay.

The start was one of the most incredible in the history of the race. In the heat of the moment, eight of the 14 yachts jumped the start before the gun, with seven W-60s, Intrum Justitia, Winston, Yamaha, Galicia 93 Pescanova, Heineken and Dolphin & Youth, and one maxi, Merit Cup, all being recalled.

Prior to the off, New Zealand's Chris Dickson on the Kiwi-Japanese entry, Tokio, held an impressive lead of 17 hours 40 minutes on Yamaha (Ross Field), Winston (Brad Butterworth/Dennis Conner), Galicia 93 Pescanova (Javier de la Gandara) and Intrum Justitia (Lawrie Smith), with the chasing pack separated by less than one-and-a-half hours.

In the maxi division, New Zealand Endeavour (Grant Dalton) had a buffer of 14 hours 47 minutes on Merit Cup (Pierre Fehlmann) and La Poste (Eric Tabarly).

Galicia 93 Pescanova navigator Juan Vila said as well as finding the best route to the more southerly latitudes, the approach to Cape Horn was crucial for the fleet. Skippers had to decide whether to come from north or south. During the 1991 race, he said, the more southerly boats had to beat to the Horn and lost a lot of ground.

"After the Horn, you have the Le Maire Straits which normally you want to go through, but the current can run at seven knots. If you are there at the wrong time, you have to go around, and you may also have to go around the Falkland Islands if the wind is on the nose," Vila added.

He said Tokio's lead was not unassailable, but if Dickson and his crew sail as well as they have so far, it would be almost impossible to surpass them in one leg.

After the start, all the transgressors, except Heineken and Brooksfield, who chose rather to face a 17-minute pen-

alty than the confusion of the spectator fleet again, turned back, giving Tokio and New Zealand Endeavour a clear run to the first mark.

The most dramatic rounding of the second mark was by Intrum Justitia. The majority of the fleet had opted to tack over to the western shore and come into the mark on port tack, but Smith tacked in the middle of the channel and was approaching the mark on starboard when he ran into a wall of spectator craft — some anchored — but managed to thread the W-60 through unscathed.

Yesterday, Intrum Justitia was averaging 16.4 knots and leading the fleet in big seas and gale-force winds on a south-east course taking the boats around both sides of the Chatham Islands 1 400 km south-east of Auckland.

The islands were the last piece of real estate the yachtsmen will see before South America.

In second place, 12 miles astern, was Tokio, followed by Galicia 93 Pescanova, Yamaha and Winston. The leading maxi, New Zealand Endeavour, was lying sixth overall, 57 miles behind Intrum Justitia.

Dalton told race headquarters that conditions were favouring the W-60s and would continue to do so for some time. "All we can do is try to hold on to the leaders so that we can attack when conditions suit us."

IT just wasn't Western Province's day at the Calsele interprovincial surf lifesaving championships at Strandfontein on Saturday. They were struck by a run of bad luck at a crucial stage of the competition and it cost them dearly.

Once again, the Central Natal team dominated the swimming events and adapted well to the choppy surf conditions to retain their title, winning 13 of the 27 events in the process.

WP won seven events, but doubles ski partners Peter Cole and Paul Marais were denied victory when they were swamped by a wave on their final turn for home. Darrin Thomas's disqualification in the flag event added to their woes, and the WP craft team's disqualification

on the line also robbed the host province of maximum points.

The star of the show was young Southern Natalian Russel Sadler, who powered his way to victory in the Iron Man event against the maestros Herman Chalupsky and Peter Cole.

The women competed for only the second time at the championships, with Eastern Province dominant with victories in the surf swim, run-swim-run and the flags. WP won the single ski and beach sprint.

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THE official launch of the 1994 Association of Surfing Professional world championship season in Honolulu, Hawaii, was marred by a bomb scare last week.

World champion Derek Ho and fellow Hawaiians John Gomes, Rusty Keaulana and Hans Hedemann and Australian Cheyne Horan were attending the press launch at the Honolulu Club when the police bomb squad responded to two calls.

"It definitely is a first for surfing to have such a gathering upset by a bomb scare," said ASP executive director Graham Cassidy. Ho said that sitting in the building was more scary than riding a 30-foot wave.

He told the gathering he was well into a rigorous training schedule which he believed had made him fitter than in all previous 11 seasons he has been on the tour.

"Having hit the heights to win the title, I want to make sure I'm



**WHITBREAD WONDERS . . .** The fourth leg of the Whitbread round-the-world race started in Auckland, New Zealand, on Sunday with the W-60 yachts once again setting the pace against the maxis in gale-force winds and big seas. The Spanish W-60 Galicia 93 Pescanova (above) was yesterday lying third, 29 miles astern of Intrum Justitia.

ready to do it a second time. I'm jumping out of

my skin for the new season to start," Ho said.

The ASP tour begins on Thursday, March 31, with the Rip Curl Pro Women's Classic at Bell's Beach, Australia.

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MULTIPLE South African Formula One powerboat champion Peter Lindenberg is still virtually unstoppable as he proved at the Thaba Nchu Sun meeting during the past weekend.

However, Lindenberg and his young protege, Renier Engelbrecht, faced a scare in the first race when Brian Lindsay caused a sensation by leading for the first 15 laps. Metres from the line, Lindsay was hampered by backmarkers and Engelbrecht sneaked through to win, with Lindenberg third.

Lindsay then blasted into the lead in the second race, but was overtaken, first by Engelbrecht and then by Lindenberg, who spent several laps duelling with his younger teammate before passing him after seven laps.

The maestro won the third race of the day convincingly from Engelbrecht and Lindsay.

The latest standings (after four races)  
1 Peter Lindenberg 75, 2 Renier Engelbrecht 71, 3 Ian Mather 48, 4 Terry Moore 47, 5 Kevin Smith 35.

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THE Western Province underwater orienteering team took second place in the South African national championships at the Appletiser Dam on Appletwhaithe Farm, Grabouw.

The results  
M course: 1 M Wright (WP) 1 252 pts,

2 M van Veelen (NT) 1 152, 3 J Bernardi (NOFS) 500.

Star course: 1 G Becker (NOFS) 600, 2 J Doick (NT) 500, 3 J de Jager (NT) 500.

Individual: 1 G Becker (NOFS) 1 654, 2 T Joubert (NT) 1 313, 3 M Wright (WP) 1 302.

Dick Grace: 1 G Becker (NOFS) 3 235, 2 T Lewinson (WP) 2 404, 3 J Bernardi (NOFS) 2 055.

Pairs: 1 M Wright and S Woodbourne (WP) 684, 2 J Tapson (WP) and D Botha (NOFS) 640, 3 I Summers and A van der Merwe (WP) 584.

Team: 1 WP 848, 2 Northern Free State 536, 3 Northern Transvaal 400.

Overall: 1 Northern Free State 5 501, 2 WP 4 604, 3 Northern Transvaal 4 335.

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AS there is a standardisation of certificates, all divers who have completed skipper certificates through the South African Underwater Union are urged to contact their clubs as to converting those into the Department of Transport certificates. More information from Alex Papayanni at tel 932-6457 (w) or 72-2776 (h).

