



**AT THE HELM:** Royal Cape Yacht Club commodore Russell Vollmer is in talks about its skipper's certificates of competence with SA Sailing, which believes some certificates issued by the club should be downgraded.

Picture: ALAN TAYLOR

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## Skippers high and dry in dispute over competency levels

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HUNDREDS of members of the Royal Cape Yacht Club (RCYC) and other sailing institutions face being turned into temporary landlubbers if they fail tests designed to assess whether they are qualified to put to sea.

Facing an April 26 deadline for the issuing of certificates to recreational sailors, the RCYC is in talks with SA Sailing (SAS) about the skipper's certificates of about 800 of its members. The issuing of competency certifi-

cates was the responsibility of the club, but has been taken over by SAS, the organisation authorised by the Department of Transport's maritime branch.

The certificate levels for skippers are: day, coastal, yacht master offshore, and yacht master ocean.

SAS wants to downgrade the level of some certificates issued by the RCYC and other clubs.

"The coastal skipper's tickets issued by the club are at the level of a day skipper's," said SAS spokesman Kieron Moore.

But the RCYC is aiming to bring the level of competency it demands for the coastal skipper's ticket in line with that required by the SAS.

"We've had talks about certain discrepancies with RCYC tickets and the legal requirements of SA Sailing," said RCYC commodore Russell Vollmer.

Moore said: "A review board looked at applications individually. Some people didn't pass and need re-examination."

Vollmer said he was encouraged by the talks and believed

the problem could be resolved. "We're not trying to buck the law. Some members are aggrieved, but we'll do what we can and will represent those cases."

Hout Bay Yacht Club commodore Alan Batley thinks there is unnecessary overregulation and that there are loopholes in the law. "If a yachtsman is deemed competent by his club to compete, he should be allowed to."

Moore said most of the 10 000 members of about 79 clubs countrywide had complied with the regulations.