

Wind sinks big day for Shosholoza squad in Table Bay

STRONG winds wrecked Team Shosholoza's daily six-hour training session in Table Bay yesterday - along with a chance to show off their prowess to special guests.

The team, South Africa's entrants in the 2007 America's Cup in Valencia, Spain, had hoped to take along Royal Cape Yacht Club commodore Russell Vollmer and new South African America's Cup Challenge deputy director Wolfgang Jakob.

Jakob is also the chief executive of T-Systems South Africa, which sponsored the team with R100 million for the next two years.

He was appointed a deputy managing director and came from Johannesburg especially to watch the team practise in the bay yesterday.

The German-born businessman, who has been in South Africa for eight years, said he was proud that they had awarded the sponsorship to the team because he had worked hard to make sure they got it.

"We awarded it not just to have our logo on the yacht, but to play a real part and spend time with the crew, who are engaged in teamwork," said Jakob.

He is also working with Vollmer on a youth exchange programme, where 20 budding sailors aged between 10 and 20 will spend three weeks being

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trained in Germany in July.

Vollmer said they had yet to choose the trainees but were working on the details.

Having the Royal Cape Yacht Club chosen as the team's base was an honour, Vollmer said.

"Not many yacht clubs around the world get chosen for the America's Cup, so being invited by Shosholoza is really a great honour."

He described the crew as an "African collage" and added that they were benefiting from all the training.

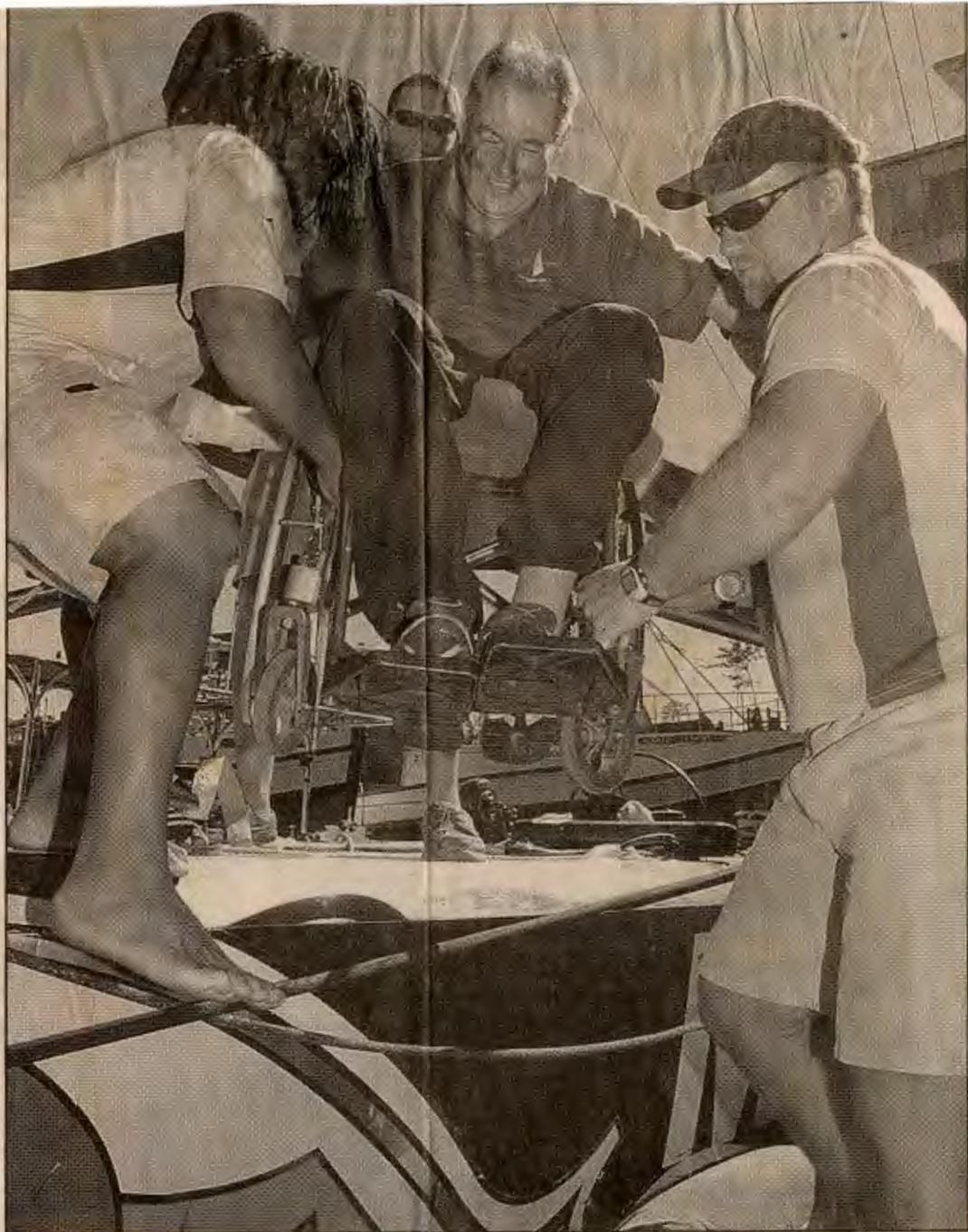
Vollmer said the team was highly professional and was doing everything right.

"They have learnt from other teams and are training with the old boat, but that has got the guys up to level.

"In Valencia, they will have the latest technology and they will certainly not be at the back of the fleet.

"In order for them to be in the front of the fleet, they are going to have to work extremely hard," Vollmer said.

Despite being a quadriplegic for the past 29 years after a diving incident in Zandvlei, Vollmer has sailed in the 2000 Cape to Rio race and participated in the 2000 as well as various regattas in South Africa.



BRENTON GEACH

All hands on deck: the crew of Team Shosholoza, Joe Heywood, Johann Spilhaus and Cameron Wills help commodore of the Royal Cape Yacht Club Russell Vollmer, who has been in a wheelchair for the past 29 years, on to their yacht.