



**Confident of victory in this year's Wilbur Ellis-Vasco da Gama yacht race between Durban and East London which starts tomorrow are the youngest crew in the race — half of whom are still schoolboys from St Andrews College in Grahamstown. The crew from left back are: Duncan Howell, Anthony Steward, Rick Mayhew, Bruce Savage and Mark Lagesse. In front are schoolboys Nicholas Shapley, Rowan Puttergill, Julian Goldswain and Julian Puttergill.**

## Sailing into stormy waters

SOUTH Africa's toughest ocean race — the gruelling 260 nautical mile Wilbur Ellis Da Gama Ocean Challenge from Durban to East London — starts at the Golden Mile tomorrow and organisers have taken safety precautions in an effort to break a jinx which has plagued the race.

Extremely demanding weather conditions have wreaked havoc among competitors in previous years and race officials are aiming to make the race as safe as possible this time round.

But, according to the weather department, things could be tricky for entrants in this year's race.

A 15 knot south-wester is expected to come through tonight and could hamper race times because entrants will be sailing into a head wind.

No storms or gales have been forecast, although it is virtually im-

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possible to predict weather conditions.

In 1984, five crew members of the Rubicon were lost at sea, presumed drowned, when the East London-based yacht the Rubicon sank off the Transkei in treacherous conditions. Only one yacht finished the 1984 race and the rest of the fleet either sank, were driven ashore or badly damaged.

Last year, 18 competitors were forced to quit the race because of the demanding sea conditions. In 1983, several competitors abandoned the race because of heavy winds and unsettled seas.

Position reports and updates — enforced since the Rubicon tragedy in 1984 — will be relayed from the yachts to the 'eye in the sky' aeroplane twice daily, while it flies over the entire fleet.

Race organisers met with the National Sea Rescue, who have alerted all NSRI stations between Durban and East London to be on the lookout for distress signals. Coastwatch have also been notified.

Specialised weather reports and forecasts will be relayed to race officials from Pretoria and information will be received from lighthouse keepers along the route.

● A total of 36 yachts have entered this year's race — four lower than the record.

Defending champion Brian Tocknell has confirmed his entry and will be going all out for the elusive hat-trick when he skippers Spindrift.

Pre-race favourites Get More Fun and Club Mykonos, both of Cape Town, will be battling it out with Durban's Ilse-Bell and Swimlion for line honours. Defending line honours champion Madame Pazzazz has failed to enter.