

Ainslie's title was richly deserved



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ON THE WIND

IAN Ainslie won the J22 class world championships last week in fine style, a title he richly deserves as he has really put an immense amount of time and effort into his sailing in recent years. This victory has to be the highlight of his career and avenges his disappointment at being denied a bronze medal in the Atlanta Olympics last year in the single-handed Finn dinghy class.

Talking to some of the Durban guys who competed, the event was a fantastic success, due to the fact that it was a one-design regatta which meant that all boats were in theory equal – the difference being in the choice of sails and helmsman/crew. This made racing exceptionally close all the time, with crews really having to work hard for good placings.

Derick Warne and his crew aboard 'Mr Price' revelled in the generally heavy conditions, and were lying fourth overall until one bad race saw them finish in the forties. Warne has always enjoyed heavy weather sailing, and having done a lot of mileage with him in the past, there is no one I would rather sail with in those conditions as he pushes his boat and crew hard without compromising on safety. According to Warne, Ainslie was in a class of his own, and used all the experience he has gained internationally to sail home a comfortable winner after eight races.

With all the rave reports about the closeness of competition, I hope that these world championships have rekindled interest in one design sailing, and that the one-design class associations get their act together to promote this aspect of sailing even more vigorously.

Last week I mentioned that an attempt was being made on the monohull Atlantic Crossing record by a 74 foot yacht called 'Nicorette'. The little information I have is that she passed the Lizard light in the early hours of Sunday morning, breaking the monohull Atlantic crossing by 14 hours 38 minutes 30 seconds.

The guys on 'Nicorette' must have had quite a ride as it would have been a fast blast across the Atlantic pushing the boat to its limit all the time, and doing in excess of 300 nautical miles a day.

Meanwhile in the Indian Ocean the BT Global fleet has been making slow progress towards Cape Town, plagued initially with too much wind, and then not enough as they were becalmed at times during the week.

Leading the fleet is 'Concert' who has a slender lead over 'Group 4' and 'Toshiba Wave Warrior'. The ETA in Cape Town for these three boats is Wednesday, although a change in weather conditions could quite easily change this. Both 'Concert' and 'Toshiba' will be looking for their first line honours victories, while 'Group 4' will be looking for her third in four legs so far.