

Mercury 22-670

Photo News

Mercury 'possibles' put through their paces

LEFT: The ketch Tub, owned and skippered by Mr. Dave Roberts, a member of the Natal Ocean Racing Foundation's crew selection committee.

BELOW: Mr. Skip Roberts (second left) and Mr. Ric Mundy (second right), two of the Natal yachting trialists competing for places aboard the Mercury, rig the foresail on Tub. They were put through their paces on Saturday by Mr. Dave Roberts (left) and Mr. Bob Tudehope.



Yachts do battle off Durban in Mercury crew selection trials

THREE Durban yachts battled stiff south-westerly winds off Durban on Saturday to test the deepsea ability of Natal yachtsmen wishing to become crew members of the Mercury — the crack, 13-metre (42ft.) ocean racer which will represent the Province of Natal in international yachting events for three years.

Saturday's crew selection trials aboard the local yachts Tub, Columbine and Seereiger will help determine the Mercury's crew for her racing debut: the 3 500-mile race across the South Atlantic from Cape Town to Rio de Janeiro in January.

The Mercury, designed by Ricus van de Stadt and sponsored by the Natal Ocean Racing Foundation, is due to be completed by her German builders within a month. She is expected to arrive in Durban in late August.

Although 25 Natal yachtsmen have so far applied for berths aboard Mercury, she will carry a crew of only seven or eight for the Rio race, in which she will be competing against 19 or so South African yachts and about the same number of top-notch ocean racers from Europe, America and Australia.

The names of Natal men who are not selected for the Mercury will be passed on to the Cruising Association of South Africa, which is helping to fill vacant crew positions aboard foreign yachts taking part in the Rio race.

