

Ainslie's tough choice

NOW we're tacking clear of the Doldrums of sporting isolation, it would appear there are more international events open to South Africans than barnacles on the bottom of a Liberian tramp steamer.

So much so that local yachtsmen are now having to choose between international events. An example of this cropped up this week when it was announced the dates of the Nations Cup match racing semi-finals off Crete have been moved and now clash with the J22 Internationals off Durban.

Skipper Ian Ainslie of Durban and his crew of Clinton Wade-Lehman, Alec Lanham Love and Alan Lion-Cachet now face the dilemma of which prestige regatta to sail in.

Ironically, Ainslie's selection for Crete came about because the first choice, Geoff Meek of Cape Town, is competing in yet another international event in America on board Rio race winner Broomstick.

Ainslie's decision apparently must be made this week and last night he was in conference with his sponsors, the Mediterranean Shipping Company, and could not be reached.

If he opts to sail off Durban then a reserve crew will probably compete in Crete, though the South African Yacht Racing Association said yesterday they were reserving judgment on the issue.

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LATEST on the NCS J22

Internationals next month is that, because of the uncertain political situation here, fewer international yachtsmen will be competing.

Dave Rushton, rear-commodore of Point Yacht Club, the hosts for the regatta, said yesterday: "We were expecting between 15 and 20 international crews but over the past couple of months, these have been whittled down to seven.

At The Helm

Norman
Sheriff



"All of them cited political unrest in this country as the reason they were withdrawing."

The remaining visitors are led by current world champion Steve Ulian of the US with other confirmed entries from Holland, England, Jamaica, Germany and two Belgian teams.

The regatta is scheduled for July 12-16.

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A **NEW** tax on yachts is being introduced from July 1 in European Community waters. EC yachts registered after 1985 will have to pay VAT based on the yacht's current market value.

In France for instance the rate is 18.6%. However, non-EC yachts, including South Africans, appear to be taking no chances and bookings at many EC ports are down.

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AND speaking of money, it was announced this week that the Royal Yacht Britannia will definitely not be opened to the public.

The proposal apparently came from residents of the Isle of Wight where the yacht is moored for two weeks every summer for Cowes Week, the idea being that the revenue generated by guided tours will help with the £11.4-million per year it costs to operate the yacht.

And you thought you had problems operating your dinghy!