

Weekly watersports round-up

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THE yacht-racing world is abuzz with excitement about South Africa's return to the Olympics and the possibility of Cape Town becoming a major international venue.

And last week's Crystic Week regatta in Durban saw an exceptionally high standard of sailing, with Cape yachtsmen taking their fair share of the spoils.

The winner of the L26 class, Craig Richards, sailed an extremely consistent regatta, a third place representing his worst position in a single race. Second overall came Transvaal's Paul Thompson and third Patrick Harris of Durban.

Cape yachtsmen dominated the J22 class, and Chris King on NCS Bellamy scored a vital psychological victory over Dave Hudson on Port Owen Two with the prestigious Joko Lipton Cup only weeks away.

Hudson, the defending champion, held a commanding lead throughout the week and was favourite to retain his Crystic title going into the last day's racing.

But disaster struck as he finished fifth in the crucial final race — his worst placing of the entire week. King's second-place finish clinched him the J22 title.

There was a white-wash for Robbie Wilcox of Transvaal in the J27 class as he won all six races aboard his Owens and Davern, and Tony Cockerill took Odin's Eye to a similar victory in the Hunter class.

The IMS class long-distance race to Richard's Bay and back finished early in the afternoon with the luxurious cruiser-racer Moonpath taking line honours three hours ahead of her nearest rival, Fujimo.

The victory was another feather in the Cape's cap. Although the yacht is Durban based, her skipper was Cape Town's Craig Middleton.

The culmination of Crystic Week has focussed all eyes on next month's Lipton Cup and September's Crystic Beachcomber race from Mauritius to Durban.

Some close racing can be guaranteed for South Africa's oldest regatta in Table Bay. Hudson, of Royal Cape, will be out to break Zeekoevle's three-year winning streak by King and Nankin, and Hout Bay's Greg Davis, on Judron, will also be keen upset the aspirations of both other Cape Town clubs.

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SUNDAY's Royal Cape Yacht club race "re-match" between Crystic Beachcomber favourites Get More Fun and Bos-

sanova was virtually all over bar the shouting seconds after the start.

Get More Fun, skippered by Geoff Meek and Dave Abromowitz, failed to receive the course change 10 minutes before the gun, and started from the wall end, with Bossanova (Padda Kuttel) making a perfect start for the first mark off Robben Island from the pin-end.

On the first reach Bossanova held a comfortable lead of close to a mile, and after the spinnaker reach to the Milnerton mark and a short beat to the third mark, held a decisive five-minute advantage.

But Meek and Abromowitz are made of stern stuff, and caused those aboard "The Boss" some anxious moments by getting the wind pattern first in the final two-sail reach.

Get More Fun was closing fast, and at the end was within 34 seconds of the winner, a remarkable bit of sailing.

It all augurs well for Mauritius, where a titanic battle between the two big guns is expected.

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