

# 'Cat' in search of line honours

A RADICAL 15m catamaran is currently being built in Cape Town with the sole purpose of achieving a record-breaking line honours victory in the 1993 Rothmans Cape-to-Rio race.

Expected to be one of the fastest boats ever built and raced in South Africa, the Alex Simonis-designed yacht will be one of the first to compete under a new rule that has opened the historic race to multi-hulls.

Commissioned by Colin Kenny of Cape Town and due to be launched within a few weeks it will be raced by a minimal crew of only four, including three crack Springboks.

Skippers the yacht will be top South African yachtsman Chris King with Pete Shaw, Doug Allison and Colin Kenny as crew.

"Our mission is to break American Huey Long's 1976 record of 17 days 5 hours. His average speed was nine knots but we'll be going even faster to be in Rio first," said Kenny.

A confident King believes the boat could take line honours by a couple of days if the weather is right and the wind blows a steady 10 to 15 knots.

"A cat has no limitations. If the weather is right, she will just take off and go like a rocket," he said.

Rated as one of the most appealing ocean races in the world the 3 600-nautical mile transatlantic race will start in Cape Town on January 9 and follow a warm trade-wind course via Ilha de Trindade to finish in Rio de Janeiro in time for the carnival.

Kenny, who has only watched the dramatic starts of the Cape-to-Rio races of the 1970s from Signal Hill, said that when the reinstatement of the race was announced he decided he would be part of it 'no matter what'.

Initial thoughts of simply being a crew member led to others of building a boat to take handicap honours and finally to the present campaign which aims specifically to 'grab the headlines' in a bid for line honours.

## AT THE HELM

With Norman Sheriff



MEETING THE CHALLENGE . . . Galactica, Royal Natal Yacht Club entry in the Joko Lipton Cup off Hout Bay takes third place in the first race of the series

He said he approached Simonis, designer of many of South Africa's top racing yachts and recipient of the Royal Ocean Racing Council designer award in 1990, to help him in his bid to 'cock a snook at the yachting establishment'.

Simonis's concept is described as a fourth generation catamaran designed and optimised to comply exactly to the specific rule requirements of the race.

"While the rules are very specific, our design modifications have resulted in a yacht that

should be super fast on all points of sail and be ideally suited to the Rothmans Cape-to-Rio downwind conditions," said Kenny.

The yacht, which will have a massive sail area of 390 square metres and stripped to a minimum weight for the race, will have a single daggerboard instead of the low aspect keels of a cruising multi-hull.

King, 31, has represented South Africa at almost every level of sailing — as a junior in 1973, '74 and '77 and in Lasers in 1980 and 1982.

He sailed in the 1985 Cape to Uruguay yacht race as John Martin's watch captain on Voortrekker II and, as skipper, won the Sigma 38 Class at Cowes Week in 1990.

He also skippered the formidable SX Stainless Steel team that won the Lipton Cup in 1988, '89 and '90.

Shaw, 30, has represented South Africa at dinghy level and was a member of the SA crew which won the Sigma 38 Class at Cowes Week in 1990.

He has sailed extensively in regattas in Europe, took part in the Lisbon-Cape Town Dias race and has won Rothmans Week (Class 2) and the Joko Lipton Challenge Cup regatta three times.

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THERE'S a new hand on the helm at the Island Sailing Club. New commodore is Des May with Gordon Wishart coming in as vice-commodore in charge of sailing, while former commodore Aubrey Trubshaw is the new vice-commodore in charge of juniors.

The AGM of the Point Yacht Club was held this week and resulted in no change in the flag officers — Don Shaw, commodore; Tony Hurter, vice-commodore; and Graham Dibb, Dave Roshton and John Pitcher as rear-commodores.

Club honours at the AGM were bestowed upon Olympic yachtsmen Bruce Savage, David Hudson and Ian Ainslie and Professor 'Wog' Hawksworth for administrative excellence.

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THE Northern Natal Open Catamaran Championships finished this weekend on Chelmsford Dam near Newcastle with 35 cats competing. The overall winners of the regatta, hosted by Newcastle Aquatic Sporting Club, were Gordon Mitchell and Sean Fennessy of Point Yacht Club sailing a Hobie 16. Second were Bill Mullins and Noel Holeman of Stilbaai in a Dart while Shane Lawrence and Howard Butler of Zululand Yacht Club, also sailing a Dart, were third.