

Big threat to Zeekoevlei

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Top challenge to Chris King's crew

ZEEKOEVLEI Yacht Club's bid for a record 10th Joko Lipton Challenge Cup title is set to be fiercely contested by 22 other yacht clubs from around the country.

But fired up for a win after their recent excellent performance at the world sailing championships at La Rochelle in France, the crack Zeekoevlei crew will be hard to beat and look set to take home the R500 000 Lipton Challenge Cup again this year.

After going into the last race of the world championships in sixth position last Sunday, the Zeekoevlei combination of Chris King, Rick Nankin, Nick Baikoff, Gary Farrow and Chris Hathaway pulled off a fantastic win to take the bronze medal.

Giving them a run for their money in this year's regatta which starts at Club Mykonos off Langebaan Lagoon tomorrow will be 10 other Cape clubs, six from the Transvaal, three Eastern Cape, two Natal and one Namibian.

Their stiffest opposition should come from last year's runner-up, Greg Davis of Royal Cape Yacht Club, who, after three years as second best, is more determined than ever to dethrone the men from Zeekoevlei.

Both Zeekoevlei and Royal Cape crews have just returned from two weeks' tough sailing at La Rochelle and should be in top form.

Other clubs which are in the running for a win include Durban's Point Yacht Club, with top South African sailor Iain Parke-Ross as skipper, Imperial Yacht Club (Justin Fox), Hermanus Yacht Club (Martin Schultz and Geoff Meek), the Transvaal's Aeolians (Paul Thompson) and the East London Yacht club (Tony Allen).

The only club fielding a woman skipper is Velddrif, which will have Cape sailor Marion Cole at the helm, and a teenage crew campaigning their challenger D Byl/Manex.

After an absence of many years, the University of Witwatersrand Yacht Club will again be at the start line. The team, skippered by Craig Schweitzer will be racing the yacht 911 Policy/Ray-Ban.

Another university team entry comes from Natal with Patrick Jolly and Neil Tocknell skippering Galactica.

Because of other commitments the University of Cape Town crew, who notched up a third last year, will not be sailing in this year's regatta.

Three Defence Yacht Club entries — from Simon's Town, the Boland and Pretoria — will also be at the start line.

The event, which celebrates its 83rd anniversary this year, finishes on Friday.

The 23 competing yacht clubs are:

Cape: Zeekoevlei Yacht Club (Chris King), Royal Cape (Greg Davis), False Bay (Billy Leisegang), Hermanus (Martin Schultz and Geoff Meek), Gordon's Bay (Bradley Stemmett), Defence, Simon's Town (Allistair Keytel), Defence Boland (Andrew Blake), Langebaan (Doug Alison), Imperial (Justin Fox), Velddrif (Marion Cole) and Hout Bay (to be advised).

Transvaal: University of the Witwatersrand (Craig Schweitzer), Deneysville Aquatic (H Karolius), Defence Pretoria (Robbie Edwards), Aeolians (Paul Thompson), Lake Deneys (E Sternagel and K P van Wyk) and Transvaal Yacht Club (David Rae).

Eastern Cape: East London (Tony Allen), King Williamstown (Ian Cunningham) and Algoa Bay.

Natal: Point Yacht Club (Iain Park-Ross) and University of Natal (Patrick Jolly/Neil Tocknell).

Namibia: Walvis Bay (Ali Serritslev/Henry Wiggins).



LIPTON START: Flashback to last year's Lipton Cup start at Club Mykonos. This year's regatta starts tomorrow and finishes on Friday.