



ABLE SEAMAN . . . John Turner shows the spirit of a seasoned old salt

Picture: TERRY SHEAN

19/10/1996 SUNDAY TIMES

By RENÉ Du PREEZ

Sailor's sea legs are just a tad wobbly

YACHTSMAN John Turner will compete in the R500 000 Lipton Cup Challenge in Table Bay, Cape Town, from August 31 to September 7 — despite the fact that he has two broken ankles and a crushed heel.

Turner only recently swapped a wheelchair for crutches, but plans to ignore advice from his doctor and pleas from his family to give the race a miss.

To accommodate his handicaps, Turner has been moved from his normal duties on the foredeck to the yacht's cockpit.

"The Lipton is very close to my heart and I will not miss it for anything in the world," he said this week.

The spirited sailor has taken part in five previous Lipton Cup challenges.

"I'm already performing some of my new duties in preparation for the start of the race by crawling around the deck.

"But make no mistake — I'll be there when the Lipton gets underway."

Turner was injured six weeks ago when he stepped out onto the window ledge of his second floor flat to check a television aerial.

"The bolt holding the aerial came loose. I lost my

balance and fell onto the concrete surface two floors down — but fortunately I landed on my feet.

"I was rushed to hospital and I now have more pins holding my crushed bones together than there are in the aerial that is still dangling outside my flat.

"After the op, the first thought that entered my mind was . . . oh well, there goes my dream of competing in my sixth Lipton.

"Then I realised that I might still be able to compete. Although my recovery has been slow and painful, I feel comfortable crawling around the deck. And the rest of the crew seem to be quite happy with a horizontal sailor on board."

Henry Wiggins, co-skipper of the yacht, said: "There was never any chance of John not being part of the crew.

"With ankles or without ankles, he is an important and valuable member of the crew. In fact, we just cannot imagine Medallion Mushrooms sailing without John."

The race, hosted by defending champions the Royal Cape Yacht Club, has attracted entries from Olympic yachtsmen, international sailors and 20 South African yacht clubs.