

# Durban sailors fail to meet Lipton challenge



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**ON THE WIND**

SOUTH AFRICA'S only national inter-club event, the Lipton Cup, started in Gordon's Bay yesterday with exceptionally poor representation by Durban Clubs.

In fact, for this prestige event, it was only the Defence Yacht Club at Salisbury Island which could muster an entry, while both the Royal Natal and Point Yacht Clubs, who between them have long and very proud records in the event, could not come up with entries. Well, that's strictly not true as the PYC does have an entry, but it is made up of a bunch of Cape Yachtsmen who needed a 'club of convenience' to enable them to enter. Imagine how red the faces of PYC members will be should this team, who probably don't even know what the inside of the PYC looks like, actually win?

The Defence team has put in a lot of time on the water, and is confident of doing well. Led by Rob Bowman and Trevor Donald, they rate their chances high and would desperately like to secure the Lipton Cup for the Navy during its 75th Anniversary celebrations.

Geoff Meek and Martin Schultz of Hermanus Yacht Club are the defending champions and are sailing with an unchanged team. Meek has a formidable sailing CV which includes a world championship victory, and successful participation at the highest level of the sport.

But, they have some formidable opposition in the form of the Royal Cape Yacht Club and False Bay Yacht Club. The RCYC team consists of Dave Hudson, Greg Davis and Ian Ainslie who joined the team this year. Hudson and Davis won the event two years ago, and with Ainslie, who is the reigning J 22 World Champion, joining their team, this hot combination is capable of winning going away. The False Bay team of Rick Nankin and Chris King brought a new dimension to the event when they sailed for Zeekoeivlei Yacht Club, winning for six years on the trot. Since then they have always been a threat at the head of the fleet, but have not quite managed to regain the magic which saw them victorious on those six successive occasions. This year they have strengthened their team with the inclusion of Durban's Olympic sailor, Bruce Savage.

The Lipton Cup dates back to 1909 when Sir Thomas Lipton presented a magnificent gold and silver trophy for interclub competition to promote, encourage and develop yacht racing around the coast of Southern Africa. Today the trophy is valued at over R500 000.

It has been more than ten years since the Lipton Cup was contested off Durban, and it will be longer than that coming back to our waters if local sailors do not get off their backsides and put in a concerted effort to win 'the mug'. For reasons unknown, some of our top local sailors have a defeatist attitude to the Lipton Cup believing that they cannot beat their Cape counterparts, while others are arrogant enough to believe that they can win without putting in any time and effort. While these attitudes prevail, the Lipton Cup will stay firmly in the Cape, and KwaZulu Natal sailors will be treated with disdain by their Cape counterparts for not rising to the countries greatest interclub challenge.