

# City team sets sights winning Big Apple regatta

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A CRACK South African sailing team from the Royal Cape Yacht Club is headed for the US to take part in a highly regarded invitational regatta.

The prestigious New York Yacht Club Invitational Regatta is being held from September 11 to 17 in the waters off one of the US's holy grails of sailing, Newport in the state of Rhode Island on the east coast between Boston and the Big Apple.

The regatta has attracted 22 entries, selected by invitation only, from 15 countries on six continents.

The sailors are so-called Corinthian or amateur competitors. They will race identical Swallow 22 mono-hull yachts supplied by the New York Yacht Club.

"This is a great honour for the Royal Cape Yacht Club," said the club's commodore, former single-handed sailing maestro John Martin.

"I am very proud to be leading this specially selected team who we believe will have an excellent chance of a podium finish."

Martin will manage the team during the regatta and SA Olympic team sailor Dave Hudson will be the skipper.

The team is being supported financially by an award-winning South African black economic empowerment company, African Access, based in Joburg.

Among the team leadership are Nicholas Mace, a winner of numerous offshore racing events, and SA Hobie Cat champion Hylton Hale.

A relative newcomer to the sport, but one who has already made his mark as a hotshot on the water is Wadi Xayimpi, a star sailor from the Izivunguvungu sailing school in Simon's Town.

The diminutive Xayimpi, who lives in the Red Hill informal settlement, has already had great success as a member of winning teams in South African yacht races.

African Access chief executive officer Shaun Battleman said his company was happy to sponsor the team because the company believed it was an investment worth making in youth development.

"Before you can get a return on your investment, you first have to deposit your money," he said.

"If we can help a man like Wadi, he can in turn help two others like him, and so it goes on.

"An investment such as this is not about getting money back, but getting a better South Africa in return," he said.

Battleman is due to travel to Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates in October to receive two highly regarded International Stevie Awards as the winner of the Diversified Services category for Executive of the Year and Company of the Year in the International Business Awards.

African Access is the only South African company to have achieved this.

It has also been awarded a Distinguished Honoree Medal for corporate social responsibility in the Middle East and Africa.

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**HEADING NORTH:** A top team of South African sailors are on their way to the US to take part in a high profile invitational regatta in New York. The team, managed by sailing legend and Royal Cape Yacht Club commodore John Martin, includes a new rising star in local yachting, Wadi Xayimpi of the Izivunguvungu Sailing School in Simon's Town.

PICTURE: BRENTON GEACH