

Bruce Dalling fights

LIFE HAS BECOME a hectic race against the clock for Springbok yachtsman Bruce Dalling.

"I don't know whether I'm standing on my head or my heels," says Bruce, who faces his final university examinations in a few weeks time and is also up to his neck in preparations for the Cape-to-Rio international yacht race in January.

He will be slipping off to Holland this week to try out the R100 000 yawl Jakaranda, which he will skipper in the race and which is being completed at Frans Maas' shipyard in Breskens.

Already he has paid half-a-dozen visits to Holland to keep an eye on the boat as it was taking shape.

In between his studies and overseas trips he has to fit in an intensive get-fit course. Add to this his time-consuming duties as sub-warden of a large university residence in Pietermaritzburg and you get some idea why there are not enough hours in the day for him.

The bearded Bruce, somewhat like a Viking in appearance, sprang to fame in the 1968 solo transatlantic classic and will undoubtedly be

against the clock

By
**TERRY
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one of the favourites in the Cape-to-Rio.

In typical fashion, however, he is noncommittal about his chances.

"Anyone who comments on how he is likely to do should have his head read," Bruce (32) told me this week.

But he did express delight at the craftsmanship which is

going into the Jakaranda.

Designed by the famous Olin Stephens, the sleek yacht is being sponsored by Ocean Racing International, part of the Powerful Theunis Bester complex of companies.

Bruce will be accompanied to Holland by directors of the sponsoring company, and will be joined there by a member of his Rio crew and by the designer. They will take the Jakaranda on four days of sea trials.

Then he flies back to South Africa — back to his studies, rigorous training and warden duties — while the boat is shipped out in a freighter.

Reluctant

One job he has had to shelve for lack of time is the writing of a book highlighting the solo transatlantic race, in which he crossed the line second but was winner on handicap.

When he went to England to complete he was virtually an unknown, but he emerged as a national hero.

He was a reluctant hero, however. Reserved and unassuming, he did not enjoy the limelight which his achievement brought him. He dreaded the hero's welcome which awaited his return home.

If he pulls off another success in January, no one will be happier than he that the race finishes in far-off Rio and that he will escape the fanfare.

After the race, the Jakaranda sponsors intend that the boat should carry on to the United States East Coast and England for several more glorious months of competition.

"As many of the crew as possible will stay on, while those who can't will fly back from Rio," Bruce said.

After he has completed his November examinations he will waste no time in preparing for the Rio event. The 10-man crew will assemble in Durban in mid-November from the Cape, the Transvaal and Natal, to undergo full-time training.

Bruce has worked out a rigorous programme — "it will really make them sweat."

As with the boat, he has taken meticulous care in choosing the crew, looking out for easy-going but dedicated men.

"It is vitally important, considering how long we will be at sea together, that we should be temperamentally compatible," he said. "I tend to get on best with very easy-going types, but they must have a strong will to win as well."

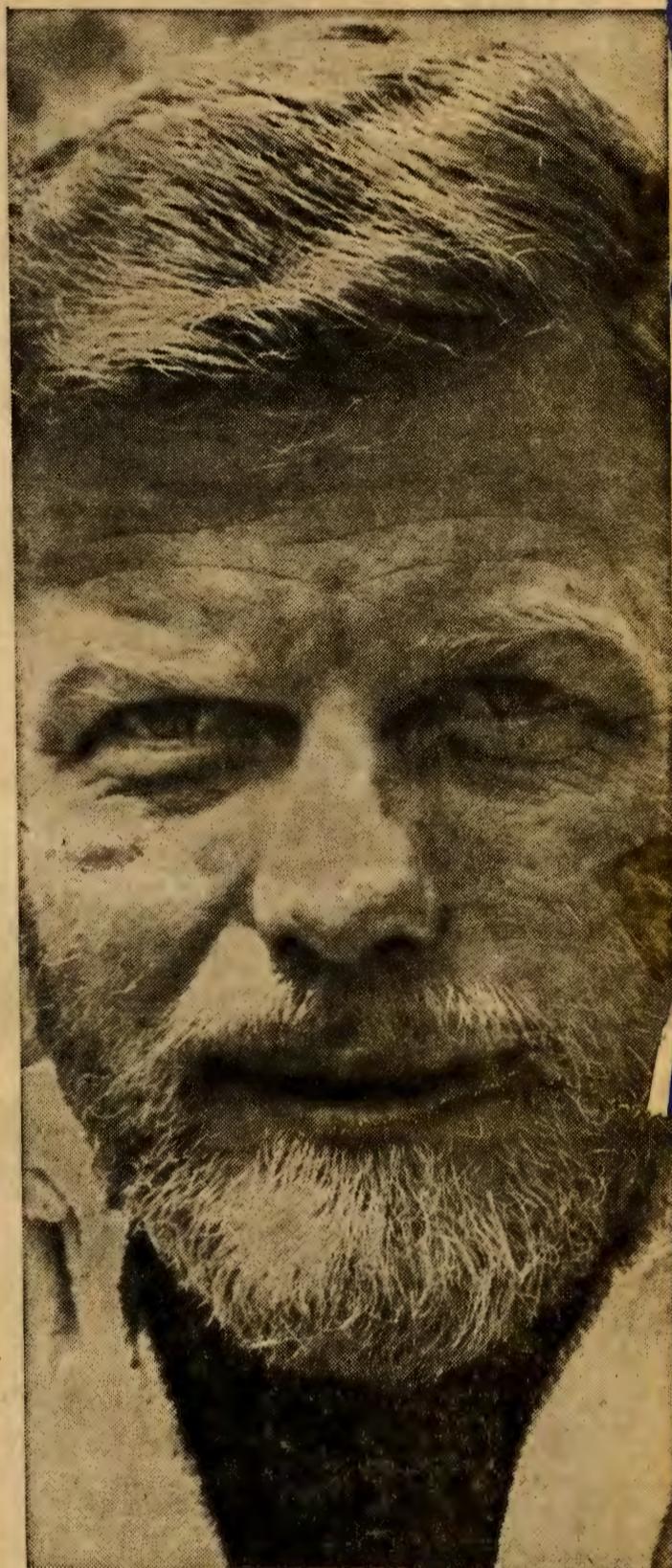
He warmly praised the organisers of the race, the Cruising Association of South Africa, "who are doing a great job." And he said he hoped the event might become one of the classics of the international racing calendar.

Problems

Bruce confessed that when the Cape-to-Rio was first mooted, he was pessimistic about its chances of success.

"I thought the organisers would be lucky if they got 10 entries. But the international response has been fantastic.

"Thirty-five firm entries so far — and likely to be up to 50 eventually! The contestants will include some of the world's best, even though the timing of the event clashes



Bruce Dalling . . . modest hero.

somewhat with other major races. But this problem can be sorted out in future years."

Does he foresee any serious problems for South Africa in organising an international event of this nature, in view of the country's growing isolation in the world of sport?

"I sincerely hope the boycott movement will not spread to yachting, although it is obviously a possibility. Thank goodness people can't demonstrate in the middle of the ocean."

Bruce has a B Sc degree in agriculture and is writing his BA with theology and philosophy as majors.

But he won't be entering the ministry — "The church has enough problems without guys like me" — and nor will he become a farmer.

"I have fingers in quite a few pies," was all he would say about his future career.

In between his two degree courses he crammed in a great amount of adventure. He sailed tens of thousands of miles, and at one stage served with the British troops during the Indonesian uprising.

Talented in several sports, he captained Natal under 19 rugby team and played for Natal University first fifteen for a number of seasons. He also played cricket for Transvaal schools.

He has a razor-sharp humour, well illustrated by an incident which took place some years ago when he was sailing a tiny yacht in the Gulf of Tonkin.

He passed several American warships, bristling with massive guns. From the deck of his yacht he sent a signal: "Will not attack unless provoked."

In reply he received only a dour acknowledgement from one battleship.