

Mishaps dog S A yachts before ^{N/Merc} in 20/9/85 start of race

Mercury Team on Mauritius

PORT LOUIS—Several South African yachtsmen are licking their wounds on the island before the start of the first Beachcomber Crossing on September 28.

One of the worst affected yachts is Spirit of Appletiser II which lost her propeller seven days after leaving Durban and subsequently broke a shroud, two winches and lost her radio antenna in bad weather.

On her arrival in Port Louis the vessel ran aground in an outgoing tide and had to wait for high water before she could moor.

The former Stander-gang-owned Lily Rose once again found herself under the spotlight when she hit a number of coral reefs and was guided into Grande Baie by Cape Town yachtsman Dave Elcock, who rowed out to her in his dinghy in a strong south-easterly on Sunday.

Although the incident did not cause any severe damage to the steel-hulled yacht, her skipper, 23-year-old Peter Atkinson, donned a snorkel and goggles to find out that he had left a large patch of anti-fouling paint on the reef.

More than welcome

Dave Elcock, who took South West Africa's Chief Justice, Judge Hans Berker's Solitaire to Mauritius in a record time of 19 days, said yesterday he hoped to pip Springbok yachtsman Bobby Bongers to the post.

Bongers will be sailing a similar yacht, a Compass 47, Broadway Port.

However, the extremely bad conditions — up to 35 knots from an easterly direction — which have plagued yachts going to Mauritius, would be more than welcome if they lasted to the start, he said.

Some of the other yachts which were damaged on the way to the start are Broadway Port and Penny Pinchers. Penny Pinchers lost her storm jib and had to tighten her loose keel in Port Louis when the tide was out.

A number of Cape Town yachtsmen are walking up and down the golden beaches with very worried looks because the arrival of their yachts has been delayed. The yachts will arrive in Mauritius only next week as rain delayed the sailing of the cargo ship Acacia from Durban for two days.

But the shipping company has been very helpful and has changed the sailing schedule so that Acacia will dock in Port Louis before going on to Reunion, which

was to have been her first port of call.

This kind of schedule will get the Spirit of CIW II, Majimota, Shoestring and the race favourite, Royal Palm, named after the new Beachcomber hotel under construction in Grande Baie, to their skippers 36 hours sooner than expected.

Today Paper Pack Excalibur, IGI Gwaap, Magic Carpet and Three Spears will be offloaded from the freighter Flamboyant which docked in Port Louis yesterday.