

8-9-88

YACHTING

America's Cup

San Diego

First race: Stars and Stripes
(Dennis Conner) bt New Zealand
(David Barnes) by 18min 15sec.
Best-of-3 series

THE AMERICA'S CUP

Kiwi challenger given a thrashing

STARS and Stripes yesterday thrashed New Zealand, as expected, in the opening race of a best-of-three America's Cup yachting series.

New Zealand's 34 crewmen, including owner Michael Fay, could only perch on their giant yacht's overhanging deck and watch as Dennis Conner's 60-foot (18,2m) catamaran disappeared towards the horizon to win the 40-mile (64km) race.

The 133-foot (40m) Kiwi challenger fell behind in the race soon after the start. Conner just sailed away in the 6-to-15-knot winds over a calm Pacific Ocean.

Stars and Stripes reached the finish line 18 minutes, 15 seconds ahead of the sloop.

The only competition for Stars and Stripes, which covered the course in 4 hours, 54 minutes, 6

seconds, came from porpoises playing alongside the twin-hulled yacht which at times sailed as fast as the wind.

The next race is scheduled for Friday. If New Zealand wins, the deciding race would be held Sunday.

A flotilla of 1 000 spectator yachts watched the start of the Pacific Ocean's first Cup race. Only the higher-powered boats could keep up as the racers headed to the first mark, 20 miles (32km) upwind.

Stars and Stripes took 2:36:00 To reach the mark.

Should Conner retain the Cup he would join Charley Barr, a skipper at the turn of the century, as the only man to win the Cup three times. Conner is already the first American to lose it (1983) and the first to recapture it (1987).

Big single hulls wanted

SIXTEEN of the world's best yacht designers have proposed the next generation of America's Cup yachts should be big and of similar design to ensure the highest quality of racing.

Designers attending the meeting in San Diego this week included Bill Flicker, the US chairman; Tony Castro and Derek Clark from Britain; Bruce Farr of the New Zealand design team; and John Longley and Grant Simmer from Australia.

The powerful 12-metre

Association wants the class retained for future America's Cup races, but the designers said:

"The boat should be of adequate size (large) and spectacular performance in order to represent a significance commensurate with the international importance of the America's Cup."

They said the yachts should be single-hulled keel boats with a maximum overall length of 85 feet (26m) and 65 feet (20m) on the water line. — Sapa-Reuter