

Springbok Robbie a late entry

IT'S all systems go for the fourth Crystic Beachcomber Crossing yacht race from Mauritius to Durban.

A final fleet of 19 yachts will compete in this gruelling race from Mauritius to Durban, a distance of 1 600 nautical miles, with the cream of South Africa's ocean racing sailors being on the start line. The small fleet is offset by the fact that six skippers are Springbok yachtsmen, and there are five brand new yachts making their first ocean crossing.

A few late entries have swelled the fleet to 19, with the final entry

SAILING □ CRYSTIC BEACHCOMBER CROSSING

Sports Reporter

having just been received. The Durban yacht Paradise Isle is a racer/cruiser, with her skipper, Cape Town's Dave Elcock, having phenomenal experience. He has some 160 000 nautical miles under his belt, and has crossed the Atlantic nine times, and the Indian Ocean to Mauritius four times. This will be his third race, and first for the boat's owner, Pretoria businessman Dave Telford.

Another late entry was Suburban Hardware Dulux, an L 34 design yacht with Springbok Robbie Meek as skipper. This is Meek's third attempt to win the race on handicap, all three being in the same boat. His crew is almost identical to that of two years ago, and he is convinced he will pull it off this time. "We've been dogged by bad luck in the past, and now there are so few L 34s racing, we do not

have to worry about them. In previous races they were always a worry because they are so evenly matched, but now we have the entire fleet as our opposition, and we're going to win. I am also keen to win as last time the Durban yachtsmen whitewashed us, and I want to avenge that this year," said Cape Town's Meek.

With the race starting at noon on September 21, it's all systems go for the cream of local yachtsmen who will be tackling what is regarded as the country's toughest ocean race.