

Concern as storms batter favourite for Beachcomber

DALE GRANGER

GRAND BAIE — There was disquiet here in Mauritius yesterday for the skippers of the favourite for the **Crystie Beachcomber Race** with their 18-metre downwind flyer, Coldcor, caught up in heavy weather — apparently still hundreds of miles from the island.

The race, from Grand Baie to Durban, starts on Saturday.

According to co-skippers Geoff Meek and Dave Abromowitz, veteran yachtsman Bobby Bongers departed from Cape Town 12 days ago and was being battered by two storms on the way to this Indian Ocean island.

He radioed Abromowitz on Saturday to say that he was having problems hundreds of miles away from Mauritius. Bongers was unable to give further details.

Should the yacht arrive in time for Saturday's start only a major catastrophe will deny her line-honours for the second time in succession.

She is the only boat in the fleet racing for an additional two accolades handicap victory and a record breaking attempt at her own 6 days and 12 hours victory time of 1989.

Downwind and in blast-reaching conditions she is reputed to be faster than the scuttled Allied Bank. With the added combination of Meek to drive her as fast as possible and Abromowitz to look after the tactical navigational aspects, the record could be living on borrowed time, but handicap could be another story.

Abromowitz has been at pains to remind the rest of the fleet that the yacht is no longer called "Get More Fun", but a standing joke in Grand Baie has been her new jocular nickname, "Get More Carrots".

Some sailors don't give her a breeze of a chance for handling laurels but Meek and Abromowitz, with their thousands of sea miles and impressive past victories, could make the sceptics eat their own words.

Starting as handicap favourites must, however, be Greg Davis at the helm of the 16m AMC Classic Challenger.

Davis gave the boat an instant reputation with her maiden race victory in the Hout Bay Admirals Cup regatta in April.

BUSINESS DAY

16/9/91