

Victory for Moonpath

Durban yacht beats Cape Town challenge

THE Durban yacht Moonpath took line honours in the Shandrani Round the Islands race yesterday.

The race is the second of the run-up series for the 1991 Crystic Beachcomber race from Mauritius to Durban which begins on Saturday.

The 22 nautical mile race began off Grande Baie in 12 knots of wind with Durban's MSC Donna Mia taking an early lead at the pin end of the line on starboard tack.

Half-way up the beat to Gunners Quoin, Moonpath took the lead and held it although once around Flat Island, Shandrani, skippered by Cape Town's Ian Martin, began a strong challenge.

These two were considerably ahead of the rest of the fleet and although Shandrani changed to a flatter spinnaker could not come to terms with Moonpath which took line honours by four minutes in front of Shandrani.

Third over the line was Cape Town's AMC Classic Challenger with Durban's MSC Donna Mia fourth.

Moonpath's skipper Iain Park-Ross said after the race "I'm pleased with her performance al-



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though we'll need a lot more wind in the big race."

An indication of the expected battle between the L34s was given yesterday when Durban's AFI Fibre Glass Warrior skippered by Ernie Shaw, beat Cape Town's suburban Hardware Dulux by 200 metres.

A jubilant Ernie said afterwards "This augers well for the main race. They had six people on board and we had 14. Once around Flat Island, being lighter, they closed up but we gybed in front of them and closed up to a tight spinnaker reach to the finish. If it's like this in main race, we'll have no problems."

□ The 1991 Crystic Beachcomber Crossing fleet with all 18 yachts has assembled at Grand Baie Yacht Club.

Coldcor, previously Get More Fun, Paradise Isle and Ocean Sailing I all arrived yesterday.

The only concern is that the Durban registered Kiga's new mainsail has not yet arrived from the Durban sailmakers. Her previous

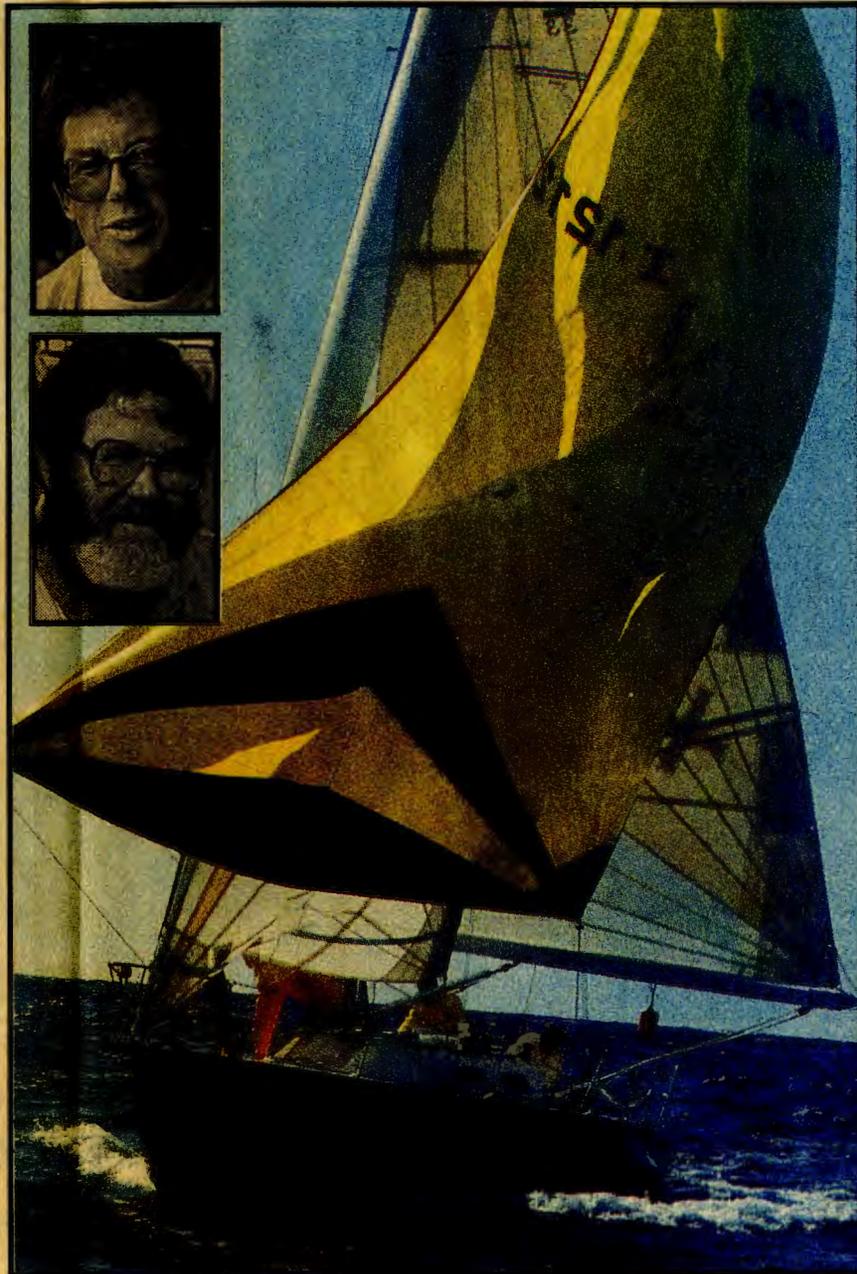
mainsail was blown out in a gale on the passage to Mauritius.

Salvage work continues on the Cape Town yacht Spilhaus which was wrecked off Flat Island on Sunday night. Most of the equipment has now been taken off including the mast.

□ The biggest foreign challenge to a South African-designed yacht for handicap honours will be the American-built MSC Donna Mia, sailed by co-skippers Harry Ellens and Derick Warne of Durban, writes Douglas Alexander.

The sleek dark blue-hulled 33-foot J33 yacht was imported from Rhode Island in the United States specially for the Mauritius race and, in the experienced hands of Ellens and Warne, will be hard to beat for overall handicap honours.

Of the famous American J breed, the MSC Donna Mia carries more sail and is lighter than the L34s but will give them some hours handicap in the tough Indian Ocean crossing, which the Cape Town-designed L34s have recently dominated.



The American-built MSC Donna Mia, sailed by co-skippers Derick Warne, top, and Harry Ellens, of Durban, was specially imported from Rhode Island for the Mauritius to Durban race