

# Three-way race for honours



FRONTRUNNER: The Durban yacht Yes Yes NBYes prepares for the Mauritius Crossing Race which starts off Grand Baie tomorrow.

From Norman Sheriff in Mauritius who will be covering the race from the SAS Walvisbaai



**G**RAND Baie is a flurry of frantic activity today as final preparations are made on board the 10 yachts due to compete in the Point Yacht Club's Mauritius Crossing race which gets under way at 1pm SA time tomorrow.

The fleet has been reduced to 10 yachts by the scratching of the Reunion-registered yacht Estelle, skippered by defending champion Alain Lallier, who won the 1991 race at the helm of 12 du BTP.

But race officer Dave Rushton is undeterred. "Despite the small entry, this will still be a very competitive race, especially for handicap honours. Across the line I see it as a three-way tussle between Yes Yes NBYes, Silverstream and Golden Sovereign."

This view was reinforced this week with the Round the Islands Race staged by the

Grand Baie Yacht Club, where the performances of the race fleet were watched with considerable interest.

Seven of the Durban-bound yachts took part plus three local ocean racers. Golden Fleece still has engine problems while Sunday Star and Enerlec had not arrived in time to participate with both yachts having been delayed after experiencing technical problems on the voyage over from Durban.

The course was about 20 nautical miles in a figure of eight configuration around the islands of Gunner's Quoin and Flat Island.

A fair breeze of 12 knots from the north east and a flat sea made for some excellent sailing in the race which was sponsored by a local company Scott Shipping.

wind as the fleet rounded the halfway stage on the other side of Flat Island but this did not affect Golden Sovereign which, under the command of Reinhold Antweiler, sailed on to take line honours in a time of just over three hours.

She was followed some eight minutes later by Silverstream — a mere five seconds ahead of Yes Yes NBYes. Fourth place over the line went to Holiisa which was the first of the local yachts home.

The more important handicap results however gave the race to Southern Floe, six minutes ahead of Yes Yes NBYes on corrected time. Third went to Silverstream followed by Kiga and Golden Sovereign.

This was a particularly significant result for Bowman's Southern Floe — the current favourite for handicap honours. An obviously ecstatic Bowman said after the race: "The preparation work we put in for this race really paid off. The guys who had never sailed together before really know the boat now — though this result is better than expected and I only hope we can maintain this standard."

Of the main race Bowman said: "Really it's a case of going the right way. That may sound simple but remember, there are three weather patterns between here and Durban and at least four overall routes. Whoever makes the right decisions will win."

## Rounded

Golden Sovereign, at 54 feet the largest in the fleet, was over the line at the start and incurred a time penalty.

Shortly after the start, Robbie Bowman tacked Southern Floe, the smallest yacht in the fleet, on to the inshore tack followed by the two Stadt 34's Rosa Viento and Keren. Surprisingly the three local yachts did not follow suit in what most locals considered the more advantageous tactic.

There was a break in the

## Navigator Lynnath keeps the guys in line

THE only female member of the crew of Yes Yes NBYes is Dr Lynnath Beckley who holds the position of navigator.

When she's not sailing, Lynnath, 38, is a marine biologist and the senior scientist at Durban's Oceanographic Research Institute, a position she has held for almost three years.

Port Elizabeth-born Lynnath has an impressive sailing CV and has crewed on yachts as diverse as Stadt 23's and Lavranos maxi's.

But her usual crew piece is that of navigator and it was in this position that she helped win the 1985 South Atlantic Race to Punta del Este on board Spirit of CIW 2. She also navigated her way to fifth place overall on board Wizard in last year's Rothmans Cape to Rio Race. Lynnath has also completed two previous Mauritius-Durban races, one Lisbon-Cape Town race as well as racing in major offshore regattas in England, Australia and New Zealand.

Lynnath was virtually thrown in the deep end in 1979 when, after a couple of years of dinghy sailing, she was given the opportunity of sailing in the South Atlantic Race — the first time she had been out of sight of land — as navigator but she managed to get the yacht to the other side without mishap!

But, how does she feel about fitting in with what is generally considered to be an all-male environment?

"I've done so many races with mixed and all-male crews now, I don't even think of it any more. In fact I usually end up doing more on board than the average crewman



LYNNATH BECKLEY: Navigator of Yes Yes NBYes.

such as fixing cuts and bruises and supervising the culinary efforts of the men," she said.

"It's an interesting daily schedule at sea as apart from being the navigator and standing my watches, I handle the radio operator's duties as well."

And what of the future? "Now there are more opportunities for internationally competitive races, I'll play it by ear. If someone phoned me today and said 'Come and sail the Sydney/Hobart race,' I'd go like a shot."

"I'd also like to do a Transpac Race from California to Hawaii," she said, "and possibly even a Whitbread round the world race."



THE NAVY'S HERE: The Mauritius Crossing fleet will be radioing their positions every day through to the two South African Navy communications ships, the minesweeper SAS Walvisbaai, pictured above, and the diving

tender SAS Fleur both currently on a goodwill cruise to the islands. The reports will then be relayed back to The Daily News and published in chart form so that readers can follow the fleet's progress.



A TASTE OF PARADISE: The beach and pool area of the La Pirogue Hotel in Mauritius. You could be there soon.

Pictures: Robbyn Ramsay

## You can still win that dream trip to Mauritius

THERE'S still time to enter the Mauritius Crossing Competition to win that dream holiday for two to the magic island — but you'll have to be quick as the competition, first announced last week, closes at noon on Tuesday, September 20.

All you have to do is estimate how long the yacht Yes Yes NBYes will take to make the crossing from

Grand Baie, Mauritius, to Durban — some 1 600 nautical miles.

Here's a clue. Yes Yes NBYes should make about 240 nautical miles in a 24-hour period if the wind blows at about 25 knots from the north east.

The yacht is part of an 11-strong fleet which begins the gruelling ocean crossing at noon tomorrow. The event has been organised by the Point

Yacht Club.

Then fill in the coupon found on this page and get it to us before the closing deadline.

The prize on offer includes:

Seven nights and eight days at the La Pirogue Hotel and Casino for two.

Return airfares in economy class from Durban to Mauritius.

Roundtrip airport/hotel transfers in Mauritius.

Dinners and breakfasts daily.

Theme parties and dinner dances.

Accommodation on a twin share basis.

Resort water and land sports (excluding scuba diving and deep sea fishing).

World Leisure travel bag per adult and document wallet.

The prize, which excludes airport departure tax, comes to you with the compliments of the NBS, World Leisure and Turners Travel.

Good luck with your calculations.

### The NBS Mauritius Crossing Competition

I predict the yacht Yes Yes NBYes will complete the Point Yacht Club Mauritius Crossing Race in the following time:

.....Days.....Hours.....Minutes.....Seconds

Name.....

Address.....

Telephone.....

Paste your entry on a postcard (no letters please) and post it to:

**NBS Mauritius Crossing Competition,  
PO Box 47516,  
Greyville, 4023**

#### RULES

- The competition is free and open to all except employees of Natal Newspapers and NBS and their immediate families.
- The prize may not be exchanged for cash.
- Closing date for entries is noon on Tuesday, September 20.
- The judge's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.

## Ocean racing is not all plain sailing



WHAT'S COOKING: Co-skipper Patrick Holloway whips up an irradiated meal.

MENTION the world 'yacht' and the average person immediately thinks of some millionaire's 500-foot floating gin palace moored on the Riviera with bikini-clad bimboes lounging about the deck waiting for the cocktail steward to bring their champagne and caviare.

There are such craft but life on board a racing yacht like Yes Yes NBYes is very different.

Because a racing yacht is designed to be sleek and light, everything is geared to speed and crew comforts have to be kept to a minimum.

Below decks, don't expect it to be all fitted carpets and soft furnishings. Every inch of space is taken up by sails, spare ropes, food, water, medical supplies, emergency gear and a thousand and one other things essential to a safe and fast passage.

Take food for instance. Fresh meat, vegetables, fruit and dairy products obviously will not last for a voyage of 1 600 nautical miles, especially in the dank, condensation-covered interior of a racing yacht.

Most yachts, including Yes Yes NBYes, will be taking long life products such as milk and bread but the main victuals will be irradiated meat such as chicken or steak. This comes in sealed vacuum packs — one portion per person per pack — and has to be boiled in sea water.

### Freeze-dried

This will be supplemented by freeze-dried vegetables and rice which will be put into vacuum flasks each morning with leftover hot water from making coffee and the main meal should be ready by late afternoon for the main, and sometimes only, meal of the day.

They will be taking no cold drinks or alcohol, just lime juice, tea, coffee and water, with each crewperson being allotted a maximum of two litres of water per day.

Because of the critical weight factor, crewmembers are limited to one overnight bag each for personal possessions which consist of toiletries, costume, two t-shirts, heavy weather gear, jacket, boots and thermal underwear. There will be no shore-going clothes carried whatsoever.

The crew will work in two teams known as watches with each watch working for four hours then taking four hours off while the other watch takes over during the hours of daylight with three hours on and three hours off at night. But even when off duty the crew can expect the shout "All hands on deck" in times of emergency.

Because of this arrangement, fatigue and exhaustion can, over a long period, seriously debilitate an unfit crew and has in previous races been the difference between winning and losing.

### Critical

Yes Yes NBYes co-skipper Patrick Holloway said:

"Fitness is critical for a race such as this. You have to be fit, both mentally and physically, to make the right decisions under a good deal of pressure. These decisions include using the weather systems for the routing of the yacht to put it in the best position for its optimum performance.

"The idea is to keep the boat going as fast as possible for 24 hours a day. That sounds simple enough but to do that the crew have to play every wave along the route,

hauling in and eating off the spinnaker and mains'l, and you have to be fit for that.

"Fitness also means you're not as prone to injury, though bumps and bruises are pretty common aboard. Things happen fast on a racing yacht; a rogue wave or sudden gust can throw you off balance and a serious injury puts pressure on the rest of the crew."

Very important from a psychological point of view is personal hygiene — a difficult situation on only two litres of water per day. Most crews have a sea water shower using shampoo — ordinary soap will not lather — and drying themselves quickly before the salt sticks.

Another trick is to use pure alcohol which is sprayed on to the body which also prevents sea sores.

So, life on board a racing yacht is far from glamorous. It's tough — and so are the crews competing.



BEDTIME: But on board you're lucky to get three hours sleep at a stretch.

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