

# Surprise winner in yachting warm up

TOMMY BALLANTYNE 21/9/2005

PORT LOUIS: With one boat still to report for the start on Saturday of the Mauritius to Durban yacht race, seven of the anticipated fleet of 12 yachts were in action in yesterday's Grand Baie Challenge Cup warm-up race.

This took place off Port Louis where the fleet is berthed, and produced a surprise winner on handicap.

The Royal Cape Yacht Club entry Naledi, skippered by Felix Schneder-Bieschin, took the honours ahead of Dale Promnitz's Unleashed and the host club's Investec under Terry Wilson.

As expected, the biggest boat in the fleet, Warrior, representing Algoa Bay Yacht Club with Rick Nankin at the helm, got off to a fast start in the good wind conditions on an out-and-back course of 26 nautical miles, with Unleashed and Naledi in pursuit.

It outstripped the rest of the boats to win line honours in four hours and nine minutes, with Unleashed second (4:16) and Naledi third (4:26).

However, Warrior did not have its full racing crew on board, unlike Naledi and Unleashed. Investec, in its first race with a new crew, recovered from a slow start hugging the coastline to finish a creditable third on handicap.

Race officer Dave Claxton said that the Point Yacht Club's cruiser, Pursuit, skippered by Matthew Trumann, was still to report in Port Louis.

At noon yesterday, it was still 140 nautical miles from port and will now only arrive early today.

RNYC entry Moquini, skippered by Graham Cochran, arrived late on Tuesday evening after being at sea for 16 days battling headwinds and heavy seas.

Owner Graham Cochran said the auto helm had failed and they had resorted to manual steering. Water had leaked into some of the electrical systems and had knocked them out.

With food supplies running low, the delivery crew had had to go on short rations of one meal a day.

At yesterday's welcoming party at the Grand Baie Yacht Club, Warrior was being tipped as the winner of the Mauritius to Durban race, which starts at noon (SA time) on Saturday.