



PICTURE: SUPPLIED

ROYAL Natal Yacht Club's Pacer 42 yacht Unleashed, skippered by Dale Promnitz, sets sail from Mauritius at the start of the race to Durban

Warrior leads the fleet on way to Durban

TOMMY BALLANTYNE 13/1/2005

WITH the fleet of 12 yachts taking part in the Mauritius to Durban race within 130 nautical miles from the southern tip of Madagascar at lunchtime yesterday, it was the Algoa Bay Yacht Club entry, Warrior, that led the procession in very light conditions with 48 hours' sailing behind them.

Warrior was followed by Polo Sport Gumption (Royal Cape YC), a Simonis 40-footer, with four Fast 42s in pursuit, Skitzo (Point YC), Moquini (Royal Natal YC), Investec (Grand Baie) and Zeus (Zululand YC).

Then came Ciao Bella (PYC), Naledi (RCYC), Unleashed (RNYC), Solar Cruiser (PYC), Pursuit (PYC) and Opela (RNYC).

The race headquarters in Durban, manned by Sailing KZN staff, received reports of several yachts having suffered sail damage early yesterday.

Gumption spent an uncomfortable first night reaching in 25 knots with spectacular surf.

Skipper Nicholas Mace reported that while it had been exhilarating out on deck, it was at the same time a huge challenge steering in the southerly swell that hit the boat almost beam on.

The interior of the boat had been turned into a damp mess, he said.

Skipper Dale Promnitz, of Unleashed, reported that he had been compelled to sail to the north of Reunion Island late on Sunday as they had been unable to drop their spinnaker which dictated the course for some hours until two crew members climbed to the top of the mast to sort out the problem.

Unleashed has since been reunited with the fleet and is steadily powering its way through the backmarkers.

The crew on board Skitzo have

enjoyed a wonderful two days as the leading Fast 42, but skipper Nigel Miln was saddled with the job of sewing up a damaged sail during the night.

Moquini, the I-Care entry, reported a damaged spinnaker sail while Dave Cox, on board his all-wood home-built 34 foot Lavranos Solar Cruiser (PYC), reported in an SSB radio message that all was well.

Once the fleet have rounded Madagascar the winds may freshen and tactics will come into play if the wind moves further behind them and opens up the possibility of surfing towards Durban.