

Tabarly chases Graybeard

FROM THE BRIDGE of the Cape-to-Rio race guard-ship we watched fascinated yesterday morning as the crack French helmsman Eric Tabarly packed a full suit of sails, including a massive spinnaker, on to the two masts of his schooner Pen Duick III in an effort to close the gap between himself and the elapsed-time leader, the Canadian ketch Graybeard.

The two yachts were more than 400 miles from Cape Town, roughly in line with the Orange River mouth and heading north-west. Both looked magnificent as they raced under full sail in a calm sea and a following south-easterly breeze.

In an eventful day for all on board Tafelberg, we later met the South African Navy's entry in the race, the sloop Voortrekker, about 270 miles off Luderitz.

In a moving exchange of greetings, her skipper Commander Mickey Thomas, who is also executive officer of this ship, dipped his South African ensign in salute.

Tafelberg's commanding officer, Captain Dick Cousens, returned the compliment and waved back to Commander Thomas and his crew as they spinnakered away on a course north by west.

During the lunch hour a SAAF Shackleton from Cape Town came low overhead just as we were passing the stern of the German sloop Jan Pott, which was moving along gracefully with her big blue, white and red spinnaker filling out in the light airs that characterized yesterday's sailing.

BONGERS SAILING WELL

Also among the leaders we came on Outburst, the South African-designed, built and sailed sloop which is being skippered by Bobby Bongers, of Zeekoevlei.

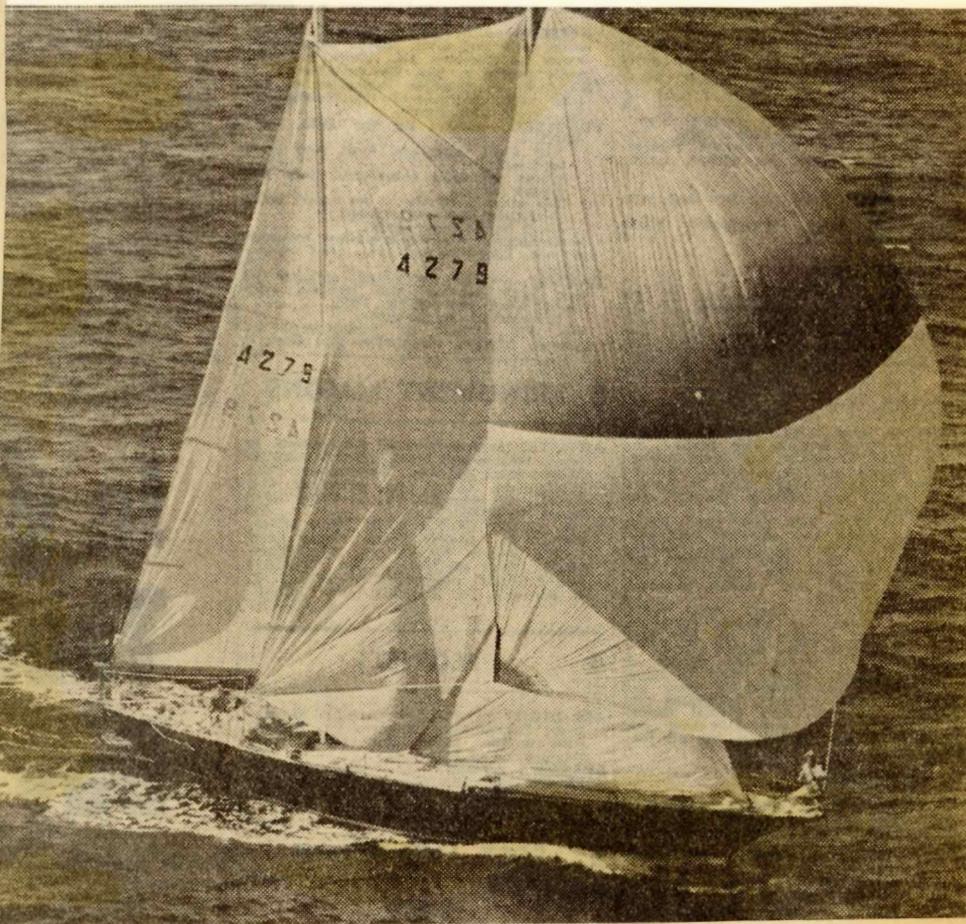
In another short chat by radiotelephone I was told by Brian Lello in the Knysna yacht Albatros that after the setback experienced at the start the boat was now moving ahead fast to make up lost time. Her milage from Cape Town at 5 p.m. SA time was about 325.

Lello said Albatros's mast troubles had been largely overcome and skipper John Goodwin was now trying out for the first time the new spinnaker which was ordered about a week before the start and which was rushed to Cape Town from Lymington, England, in record time.

It arrived by air just before the start of the race on Saturday.

From the archives of Richard Crockett & Sailing Publications.

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THE GRANDEST SIGHT of them all — master yachtsman Eric Tabarly's schooner, Pen Duick III, as seen yesterday with every inch of canvas grasping at the breeze.

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