

S.A.A.F. PATROL SIGHTS

19
1
71

18 OF THE RIO RACERS

By DAVID DOUGLAS
Cape Times Air Reporter

IN THE COURSE of a 10½-hour patrol covering nearly 2 000 miles in a Shackleton aircraft of 35 Squadron SAAF yesterday 18 yachts taking part in the Cape-to-Rio race were located. At that stage Stormy was the farthest west and Raph farthest north.

As the Shackleton, commanded by Major Wynand Bloemhof and piloted by Lieut. Dereck Page, flew over blue seas with a spanking 20 knots south-easter making the waves choppy, we closed up to Wayfarer at 7.50 a.m. Delayed in its start by more than 24 hours, the gallant little ketch was sailing at five knots, and was 116 miles from Robben Island at the time.

The yawl La Mer was seen at 8.35 a.m., 210 miles from Robben Island, and making only three knots.

It was soon after this at 9 a.m., that we encountered Jakaranda—242 miles from Cape Town — which had lost way because of its misfortunes. Skipper Bruce Dalling was downhearted. He estimated that it would take three days to get to port.

The steering malfunction was discovered at 8.30 p.m. on Sunday and a crew was sent overboard with a torch to see what had happened.

YACHT CLUSTER

As the Shackleton continued on its patrol, we encountered a cluster of yachts—Mercury, Golden City and Cariad—all about 350 miles out.

At 10.15 a.m. Tafelberg, the South African Navy auxiliary, was contacted by radio. Tafelberg was concerned about the whereabouts of Voortrekker at this stage.

At 400 miles from Cape Town, Graybeard was overhauled at 10.22 a.m. We turned and came across the French hope, Pen Duick III, 381 miles out.

Fortuna followed and then another swing in the patrol brought Stormy in view at 395 miles from Cape Town, 30 deg. 40 min. south, 11 deg. 40 min. east.

FARTHEST OUT

Turning north we passed Raph at 400 miles from Cape Town this being the farthest north of the racers, at 29 deg. 35 min. south, 12 deg. 18 min. east.

Around this time the radar was cluttered with pips, but they turned out to be cargo ships. Cariad was passed again and it was interesting to note that in the 3½ hours that had elapsed between the sightings she had covered 24 miles.

Then came Tafelberg with the sloop Jan Pott hovering close by. This was at 1.30 p.m.

Striana was passed 19 minutes later and then Voortrekker, 387 miles out, 35 miles behind Stormy and 20 miles from Tafelberg. Then came Howard Davis and Seindib IV, with the City of Germiston near by.

SEA CHOPPY

The Shackleton flew along a bearing between 300 deg. and 330 deg. It is roughly equivalent to the lower route on the race maps but there was no clear indication yesterday which yachts were going far north and which south, as the dividing point was reached only last night.

However, as most of the yachts we saw were the larger ones, it seems that there may be a number of the smaller vessels sailing south of the 18 we located.

The sea was choppy at times, with a 20-knot south-east wind near Cape Town dropping to 17 knots and then 12 knots about 300 miles out.

From the archives of Richard Crockett &
Sailing Publications.
www.sailing.co.za - editor@sailing.co.za