

Crippled *Jakaranda* chugs into harbour

By MENDL JACOBS

ANTI - CLIMAX just about sums up, in a word, Bruce Dalling's return to Cape Town in his crippled yawl *Jakaranda* at 10.30 yesterday morning.

In sharp contrast to the 100 000 and more excited spectators who gave him and his fellow competitors in the Cape-to-Rio race such a tumultuous send-off last Saturday, fewer than 40 were there to see blue-headed *Jakaranda* being towed rather ignominiously into harbour — after using the yacht's motor to make Cape Town — and made fast to a mooring buoy in the basin.

While they waited for *Jakaranda* to arrive, the newsmen and officials who made up the bulk of the spectators stood

around in little knots, talking in whispers like mourners at a funeral.

Overhead, a few gulls wheeled in flight, and their plaintive cries seemed to add to the poignancy of the sad occasion.

But from the moment that Bruce Dalling, red-eyed from lack of sleep, sprang ashore from the launch which had brought him to the Yacht Club steps, the atmosphere changed almost magically.

Calls of commiseration at his bad luck from those on the jetty were acknowledged with a smile and a cheery wave of his hand. Despondency vanished to give way to a cheerful determination to get repairs in hand with the least delay and to get back in the race as soon as possible.

At the wheel

After the formalities of customs and immigration — made as brief as possible by helpful officials — Bruce Dalling, in spite of his apparent physical weariness, allowed himself to

be closely questioned by newsmen.

He described graphically the moment of disaster. Dalling was in his bunk at the time, and Mike Allen was at the wheel. *Jakaranda* was sailing before a 25-knot wind with every inch of sail crowded on her. *Ocean Spirit*, skippered by Robin Knox-Johnston and Leslie Williams, was in sight and they were gaining on her.

Then it happened. The yawl seemed about to broach. Dalling sprang from his bunk, to hear the helmsman cry that the rudder had gone. They were 275 miles north-west of Cape Town at the time.

Damage check

It took them two hours to ascertain the extent of the damage to their steering gear, with Ritchie Bertie playing the part of the diver, without diving gear or wetsuit, but attached to the boat by safety harness.

Then it was a case of getting back to Cape Town for repairs as speedily as possible, steer-

ing erratically by the trim of the sails.

added Dalling, "which auto-added Dailling, "which automatically disqualifies us from the race."

But it was established that only the Race Committee can disqualify a boat, and, as that body has ceased to exist the moment the starting gun went off last Saturday, *Jakaranda* is still in the race.

So, it's off to Rio once more for Bruce Dalling and his crew, all of whom look surprisingly cheerful after their disappointment and lack of sleep, as soon as the rudder can be repaired.

Then, whether *Jakaranda* is to be disqualified or not will be up to the Race Committee when it reconstitutes itself in Rio.

From the archives of Richard
Crockett & Sailing
Publications.

www.sailing.co.za -
editor@sailing.co.za