

RIO COMMENTARY

Crews are settling down

21.1.71

Cape Times Yachting
Correspondent

GUIA, Three Bears and Matchless gave their first radio reports yesterday.

This is a sure sign that boats and crews are settling down to a sea routine and are able to spare time from the main job of sailing the boat at peak efficiency.

★

JOHAN GOODWIN'S sudden spurt forward in Albatros II raised a cheer in Knysna and suggests that the sloop, built in the yard which produced Voortrekker, is finding form. Her crew is a formidable mixture of experienced deep-sea sailing men and younger men with specialized knowledge of up-to-date gear, as fitted on Albatros, and their use on ocean races.

★

THE punch of a squall from an unexpected direction is among the sailing craft's greatest dangers. A racing skipper crams on as much sail as is needed to get most drive out of the existing wind. If the wind strength blows up suddenly the boat is overpowered and can be knocked down or damaged as the mast and booms swing violently.

A dark patch of roughened water travelling fast across the surface is the only warning and it takes an alert lookout to spot the signs and start action.

Sail can be reduced or the boat turned to present an edge-on profile to the blast. Racing skippers will try to ride it out and put up with the rough ride for the sake of the short hair-raising burst of speed.

★

THE FLEET has sailed through a fair patch and the leaders are heading into the stronger winds, which they prefer. Stormkaap and Jakaranda will have a 15-knot south-easter from the Cape to help them sail back into the fleet. Both have a tremendous job ahead of them and their attacks on the gap between themselves and the other boats will be as interesting to watch as the main event.

★

RICHARD BERTIE, the Cape Town yachtsman who went overside and under Jakaranda during the night in the Atlantic, did a first-class job. He is a good swimmer, very fit and he carried a line. It would have been very unseamanlike not to, but it was still a job calling for a lot of nerve.