

# *Rio leaders going like a breeze*

**From ROGER WILLIAMS  
(in the guardship Tafelberg)**

**J**UST after dawn yesterday and just westward of Greenwich meridian we in the guardship were spectators to an exciting mid-ocean duel now taking place roughly in line with Walvis Bay between the joint leaders in the Cape-to-Rio race—Ocean Spirit and Graybeard.

And what a magnificent sight these two ocean-racing giants made as they spinnakered in a west-north-westerly direction only eight miles apart.

These two biggest fibreglass yachts in the world are now in the trade-wind corridor favoured by square-riggers in the days of sail, and both appeared to be making good speed yesterday morning in a 15-knot breeze.

From a distance, Ocean Spirit looked like a giant wasp with her yellow, black and white spinnaker ballooning.

Graybeard was also under full sail, including a tremendous powder-blue spinnaker with two dark blue stripes.

As we approached Ocean Spirit from astern she flashed a message on an aldis lamp: "Good morning. Nice to see you."

She also asked when the next weather synopsis would be broadcast.

Tafelberg's reply was: "You are looking absolutely splendid. What about swopping places?"

Ocean Spirit's joint skippers Robin Knox-Johnston and Leslie Williams riposted: "No thanks. Would not swop for anything just now."

Later in radio talks with Tafelberg, the skippers of both yachts said there was considerable excitement on board in this mid-ocean duel, and although for technical reasons they are not able to talk by

radio, they were watching one another closely.

Our position when we sighted the leaders yesterday morning was about 850 miles west-by-south of Walvis Bay and 1 200 miles west-north-west of Cape Town.

Although it was overcast and cool, the weather was later perfect with a calm sea, clear sky and moderate south-easterly wind.

The ships' time was the same as GMT—that is two hours behind South African time.

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