



Cape to Rio roundup

WITH FRANK ROBB



34. CASUALTIES 23.1.71

I SHALL not inflict upon you yet another description of the start of the Cape to Rio Race last Saturday. Let me tell you only this: When those 58 yachts surged over the Start Line and the gay spinnakers blossomed and they headed for the far horizon and Rio, I and scores of thousands of other spectators went "high" — because, brother, it was a sight out of this world!

But life is a series of ups and downs, and early this week there was a general feeling of deflation because the main body of the fleet was not even out of sight before the short-waves were crackling with the disembodied voices of yachtsmen telling of mishaps and break-downs and varying degrees of heart-break.

Wayfarer — skippered by my 71-year-old friend Peter Strong — after thrashing down from Durban against headwinds and brutal gales for 16 days (normal time about 5—7 days) reported her position as "off Lion's Head" — just out of sight of the fantastic start, yet so close that her crew actually heard the boom of the starting gun — and unable to participate! (How's that for frustration?)

Shortly thereafter *Albatros II*, who had had a knock-down-and-drag-out fight with her spinnaker seconds after crossing the line,

mark-ship *S.A.S. Mossel Bay* and cross the Start Line. After that you may proceed as desired." (Peter, my heart lifted for you when I heard that—but I bet it was nothing to the way you and your crew perked up.) *Wayfarer* came in towards evening, duly crossed the line, put into port for (compulsory) scrutiny, minor repairs and stores, and sailed 24 hours late, and she is unlikely to make up for lost time (that's putting it mildly).

The crew of *Albatros II* "straightened out" her mast and reported that they were on their way—but with a "slight squiggle" in the mast. Skipper John Goodwin is a master yachtsman and can be relied upon to make the best of matters, but the hard fact is that he'll have to b-a-b-y that baby all the way to Rio — and he has lost invaluable time.

Stormkaap hopes to repair and strengthen her rudder and will continue if Dave Abromowitz is satisfied. *Jakaranda* limped home, steering with her sails and trim-tab. Her sheared rudder-stock is a major repair job, but *Dalling* may continue. But even if they can and do carry on, the loss of time means that both these yachts are—barring miracles—out of the Race as far as winning or placing are concerned.

And so, with the race hardly begun, we have two of South Africa's most-fancied yachts virtually out of the running, a third (also favoured) nursing a broken wing and a fourth 24 hours behind schedule.

The general feeling of deflation is understandable. And there will be other breakdowns (especially rudder failures), for there are a number of brand-new yachts whose design is controversial (see Round-up No. 30, para. 11), and I could (but won't) name at least three that will bear watching in this department.

But let's get the matter into perspective. The crews concerned are naturally bitterly disappointed—but they will not relish your sympathy. Goodwin, *Dalling*, Abromowitz and Strong did not get to command ocean racers by buckling at the knees in adversity, and none of them is likely to burst into tears and retire into a nunnery (oops! — I mean monastery) because the luck of the game has gone against them. At sea you take the rough with the smooth, learn the lesson, forget the disappointment—and look ahead. That's the way good skippers are made.

The simple philosophy is that there is no game worth playing into which some element of discomfort, risk—even danger—does not enter. Every crewman and woman in the Rio Race knows and accepts this — and it is for that very reason that they are to-day sailing their little ships out into the wide Atlantic. As for those to whom the sea has been unkind — wish them the luck they now need and deserve — and better luck next time.



BRUCE DALLING . . .
No buckling at the knees.

advised that she had put into Murray's Bay at Robben Island to effect repairs to her mast.

Since then *Jakaranda* and *Stormkaap* have both suffered serious rudder trouble which will put them at least temporarily and maybe permanently out of the running. So this is as good a time as any to tally-up the casualty list.

Of the original fleet list six failed to toe the line. *Tuluq* and *Petralis* (Britain), *Angantyr* and *Walkabout* (USA) and *Nango* (Mozambique) did not get to Cape Town for one reason or another, and *Quo Vadis* (SA) had a run of hard-luck incidents which left her disconsolate at mooring in the Yacht Basin. The situation of the others who have "come unstuck" since the start is as follows:

Wayfarer is unstuck only as regards time. Shortly after her anguished call the warship *S.A.S. Johannesburg* radio-telephoned her: "The Race Committee has cleared you to start the Race. You are to round the



FROM THE CALTEX NEWSDESK