

JAKARANDA HAS RUDDER TROUBLE

'Jar' felt as skeg damaged

WHILE the Cape Town sloop Stormkaap was making emergency repairs in mid-ocean early today with aid from the guardship S.A.S. Tafelberg, Bruce Dalling's Pretoria yawl Jakaranda was sailing at half-speed for Rio, hit by fresh rudder troubles.

According to a radio report received in Cape Town today, Jakaranda's new headache started about 8.50 p.m. on Saturday night when she was about 550 miles north-west of Table Bay.

Crewmen felt a sharp 'jar' and Richard Clothier went over the side where he found that one-third of the yacht's new rudder was broken away and that the skeg was damaged.

It felt to the crewmen, according to the message from the yacht, that Jakaranda had hit something.

However, skipper Bruce Dalling has not turned back and was last reported to be sailing for Rio at reduced speed — about five or six knots.

A week ago, Jakaranda turned back when she was about 275 miles out, also because of rudder trouble. Round-the-clock work in Cape Town enabled her to sail after the fleet on Friday morning with a new stainless steel rudder stock and repaired rudder and skeg.

No chance

While it appears now that Jakaranda has no chance of catching the rest of the fleet, Dalling is keen to get her across the Atlantic where she has commitments in races off North America later this year.

According to the message, everyone on board is well if disappointed at the latest setback to South Africa's favourite yacht in the Rio race.

Meanwhile, Cape Town's hot entry the white-hulled 15.5 m sloop Stormkaap, skippered by Dave Abromowitz (28) is sailing—also at about five knots—on a north-west course to St. Helena after a dramatic dash by Tafelberg to assist her.

Tafelberg closed on the stricken yacht shortly after midnight at a position 23.23 south and 04.00 east. This is due west of Walvis Bay and roughly half-way between the African coast and the leaders of the Rio race.

Three bolts

Three bolts fixing the yacht's skeg to the hull had sheared, bending the rudder stock and threatening to rip a hole in the underside.

To prevent this from happening and the yacht taking water, engineers from Tafelberg put a 'cement box' over the skeg bolts. This is a metal box placed inside the hull and filled with cement. As the cement hardens, the weak point in the hull is strengthened and the danger of a leak averted.

Stormkaap, with the veteran Cape Town gaff ketch Elegance shepherding her across the 700 miles to St. Helena, parted company with Tafelberg about 4 a.m. today.

Later in the day, skipper Abromowitz reported to the guardship that all was well.

Tafelberg is hastening back to the rest of the Rio fleet and expects to reach the leaders in about three days.

Argus reporter Neville Peat went over to Stormkaap in a motorised rubber dinghy after the

Stormkaap is out of race to Rio

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midnight rendezvous with Tafelberg.

As the yacht wallowed in the guardship's lee, a disappointed Abromowitz told of the trouble he had hoped had been repaired during Stormkaap's two-day stop-over at Port Nolloth last week.

The trouble started after Stormkaap had sailed 640 miles in 2½ days out of Port Nolloth — at speeds of up to 15 knots.

The skeg was secured at sea with wire but Abromowitz said he could not risk speeds greater than five knots in case he lost steering altogether.

Sportingly, Alan Gregory in the well-known 32-year-old Cape Town yacht Elegance, volunteered to escort Stormkaap to St. Helena, thereby possibly sacrificing any chance Elegance may have had of a prize in the race.

'Alan's gesture is in the best spirit of the traditions of the sea,' race secretary Tom Unite said in Cape Town.

Abromowitz boarded Tafelberg to see her master, Capt. Dick Cousens, but soon returned to his tired and downhearted crew aboard the yacht, gleaming white in the glare of the guardship's floodlights.

Stormkaap limped off under a mainsail at 4 a.m. — in another kind of race, a race to reach St. Helena in time to be loaded on the Cape Town-bound Good Hope Castle on Sunday.

Weather conditions are favourable with a light south-easter and a moderate swell. Stormkaap has fuel enough for 420 miles under motor.

St. Helena

Meanwhile the big Canadian ketch, Graybeard, skippered by Lol Killam, and the 12.8 m Durban sloop, Mercury, skippered by Bob Nuttall, had taken over some of Tafelberg's communications functions.

With her powerful radio, Graybeard relayed the positional reports of about 21 yachts when they reported their whereabouts at 1800 hours G.M.T. Mercury relayed about 15 others.

Stormkaap's quayside cradle will be shipped to St. Helena in the Southampton Castle which sails from Cape Town on Wednesday, arriving at the island on Saturday.

If it is decided to send the yacht back to Cape Town, she may be loaded aboard the Good Hope Castle which arrives at St. Helena on Sunday.

If, however, it is decided to repair Stormkaap there, there are adequate engineering shops. The island has a crane capable of hoisting a 30-ton boat from the water.

The island does not have a harbour but it does have sheltered anchorage.

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