



Watch the boats to the north

25.1.71

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THE north-west course taken by the entire Rio fleet is a whole hearted vote of no confidence in the shorter, more southerly line with its history of unhelpful wind conditions at this time of the year.



AS the westerly swing starts to break up the bunched mass into individuals, isolated in their own areas and sharing their weather with no-one else, the significance of the choice of a more northerly course shows up.

The boats still heading more north than west are the ones to watch. They are banking on stronger winds in the right direction for longer periods. If they meet the normal prevalent weather they should be able to ride for 2 000 miles with a wind behind every sail they can carry.

This is why boats with good performance running with the wind behind them have been chosen, and even designed, for this race. In the next two weeks designers, sailmakers and weather men will be on trial.



MORE than most people the population of Port Nolloth will be saddened by the news of Stormkaap's withdrawal from the race.

The day she limped in from the Atlantic every available help was on hand but the crew were determined to do the job completely unaided. Failing to manhandle their boat up the slip they switched tactics and did the whole job underwater.

Weary from their voyage out and back, terribly downcast by their misfortunes and always bitterly cold, they worked non-stop hauling the underwater workers out to thaw when the penetrating cold blunted their efficiency. The last stage was the worst when the repaired and buoyant skeg refused to stay under water.

Anchors were attached and then began the dreadful job of lining up the bolt holes with those in the heaving, rolling hull rocked by every water movement in the tiny harbour. Hours later the whole community joined the cheer which signalled the first thread holding and the impossible done.

Port Nolloth watched this battle and will know how heart-breaking the climax has been for Dave Abromowitz and his very game crew.