

Skipper hears his wife is safe

From NEVILLE PEAT on board S.A.S. Tafelberg

MOLLY WARR, skipper of Cape Town's all-women Rio race entry Sprinter, set minds at ease yesterday when her voice came crackling over guardship Tafelberg's radio — six days after the pint-sized sloop last reported her position.

For several days Tafelberg and the entire fleet of yachts have been keeping a special look-out for Sprinter, whose latest position puts her about 1020 sea miles from Cape Town on the southern limit of the south-east trades.

It was a relieved Ken Warr, skipper of South West Africa's Omuramba, who heard his wife Molly's message last night: 'All well on Sprinter. Position little low.'

Hopefully she concluded: 'Coming up to join you.'

Unable to distinguish Tafelberg's signal, Warr appealed to other yachts to help him to copy the message. Durban's Mercury, the first to try, was unsuccessful in relaying it. Then Lt.-Cdr. Peter Poland of Matchless chipped in, passing on the good news in a spirit of radio co-operation which has been a feature of the race.

Omuramba is more than 250 miles north-west of Sprinter and the weather forecasts are against wife catching husband as she would like. Ken Warr can expect 10-knot south-easterlies, but winds may tend to the west in Sprinter's area.

Silent since the start of the race, the 10-metre sloop City of Springs reported her position yesterday to the north of Tafelberg. Transmitter trouble has kept her off the air to date.

WITH THE WIND

A few of the yachts are still east of the Greenwich meridian — a psychological milestone in the swing across to Rio. The damaged Cape Town sloop Stormkaap will cross it in different circumstances, however, limping to St. Helena with her skeg strapped up precariously.

Walvis Bay, though closer than Jamestown at the time of the mishaps three days ago was not a possible port of refuge because the damage is such that Stormkaap must run with the prevailing south-east weather.

Skipper Dave Abromowitz told Tafelberg's Captain R. C. Cousins yesterday that progress to that stage was satisfactory following an overnight rendezvous with the guardship. We hope to overtake the leading yachts tomorrow as Tafelberg is making good time in a fairly calm sea with a light following wind.

From the archives of Richard Crockett & Sailing Publications.

www.sailing.co.za - editor@sailing.co.za