

# World interest in ocean yachting

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**A**LTHOUGH for many years South African yachtsmen have competed individually or in teams in international yachting, the South African general public have had no real chance to appreciate how world-wide and enthusiastic is the interest in both dinghy racing and ocean competition.

In the past few years yachting has, to its advantage, broken down the barriers of differences between national organizations and built up an international control which has wiped out any limit on the development of the sport.

The first aim of the organizing body was to recommend standards for international practice to open up fair competition between any yachtsmen in any country.

Experience in this international practice made it easy for competitors to fit into the Rio organization because all yacht races are sailed under the one set of rules and procedures. Similarly, all yachts are measured to one rule and handicaps are applied to a common formula.

All competitors know that any differences between one regatta or race and another will be recorded in the sailing instructions for that event and they know that it is to their own advantage to become familiar with these instructions. The main objective is to get on with sailing the boats with as little non-sailing fuss as possible.

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**B**EST publicity in the places where it counts will spread out from the cockpits of the "foreign" entries in the race over every ocean in the world. South African ports are well known to circumnavigating yachts and their standing is high but the race is a new venture and news and views about it will interest yacht clubs everywhere.

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**O**UT in the Atlantic Graybeard, and probably others, may be establishing all-time records for the number of days sailed under spinnakers. After 2 897 km (1 800 miles) she is still boring along with the wind filling the enormous sail which bellies out from her foremast. News of her steady progress on a perfect sailing wind will depress those boats wallowing in a near calm hundreds of miles behind.

If Raph, Pen Duick III and Ocean Spirit have also found Graybeard's wind, the last 2 414 km (1 500 miles) of the race will be a classic battle of the giants. The Canadian ketch is trying to reach the line, as she must, ten days ahead of the slowest boat to win on handicap. Time correction differences between her and the French and British leaders are small enough to make a flat-out effort by all four well worthwhile.

Every high-speed mile of progress in the next few days is important because, in their rush west, the leaders are approaching the area where winds swing south and the current is far less favourable. The chances of being becalmed are also increasing and the back of the fleet could still catch up.