

Albatros goes all-out for handicap win

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From ROGER WILLIAMS
in the guardship Tafelberg

WHILE the Cape-to-Rio race leaders were approaching the finishing line yesterday morning I was told by radio that the leading South African yacht, Albatros II, was "chasing squalls" about 300 miles eastward in an all-out effort to maintain her handicap lead.

Albatross II was at one stage in overall lead at the southern flank of this international fleet, but fell behind when the wind petered out and left her and her Durban sister Mercury trundling along at a mere three or four knots.

Brian Lello in Albatros II said in our radio chat yesterday: "We are naturally disappointed with the weather, which has been very fickle in the past week and not following the settled pattern of north-westerlies we were sailing in previously.

"We are now stalking squalls and using them to our advantage.

"This has been the pattern for the past five or six days."

Lello said that Albatros II had not been able to raise Mercury on the radio for some days, and the Durban boat had not been sighted.

HURRIED

At this stage, he signed off hurriedly saying he had been summoned on deck to help deal with a troublesome spinnaker boom.

We in Tafelberg, have also not heard from Mercury by radio for several days, but this is not seen as cause for concern, as radio "blackouts" are frequent, due either to techni-

cal hitches or atmospheric conditions.

After trying for several days to raise skipper Eric Porzig of the Cape Town yacht Active for a chat I succeeded last night in getting through to him as Active approached Trinidade Island, which we can see as I write this.

Porzig said his Sea Scout crew were all well and in high spirits.

"They're eating us out of house and home," he said.

Active has covered 2800 miles, and like most other yachts has had fair weather all along.

Porzig said the heat in the cabin was somewhat trying as the humidity level went steadily up, "but otherwise we have no complaints".

All the Sea Scouts wanted to send greetings to their parents, other relatives and friends.

Many yachts are passing too far south to see Trinidade, so the first land they will sight is the South American coast.

Although the race has so far been in calm seas and moderate winds, it was pointed out yesterday that one of the main problems besetting crews at this stage will be chafing of gear, particularly as most of the boats have been spinnakering nearly all the time.

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