

Breathtaking manoeuvre clinches second victory for Meek

DALE GRANGER

KING NEPTUNE would have loved the Lipton Cup regatta in Table Bay yesterday as four clubs led the fleet at certain stages before Geoff Meek broke the tape to win for Hermanus by seconds from False Bay.

Meek later described it as "the most potent race I've ever sailed in this country".

Coming from the acknowledged master of South African sailing, that is a statement not to be taken lightly considering the sailing Meek has done on keelboats alone for over 25 years since the days when he grad-

uated to bigger boats after having been a teenage national dinghy champion.

Sailing Africa Glass now has a 100 per cent record of wins in the two races sailed so far in the regatta, although in idyllic 15-18 knot northerly winds it did require a breathtaking tack on the line to beat six-time Lipton Cup champions Chris King and Rick Nankin of False Bay on Daly's Insurance.

It was only at the previous mark that Hermanus had been able to snatch the lead before the final beat, but spare a thought for the defending champions, Royal Cape, on MBS Challenger, co-skipped by Greg

Davis and Dave Hudson.

At the first mark, they had led Hermanus and False Bay by a comfortable 40m. Then the dreaded kelp plague, which haunted False Bay on Sunday, surfaced again to snare Royal Cape.

They struggled for almost the entire first reach to shake it off, only to watch in frustration as it wrapped itself around the rudder and prompting the execution of plan B — dumping crewman Joe de Kock overboard "to do the honours".

But there was no denying the magic of Meek, and Hudson said that his perfor-

mance was "brilliant textbook sailing".

Of the top five clubs in contention, Hout Bay's Jannie Reuvers on Maxtec had reason to toss a few back last night, having capitalised on the errors of Hermanus, Royal Cape and False Bay when all three overstood the weather mark.

Reuvers gratefully sneaked in to lead for a while. He eventually finished fifth astern of Durban's star-studded Olympic sailors on Point Yacht Club's Ford Falcon, skippered by Bruce Savage, boasting two other Atlanta sailors on board in skipper Ian Ainslee and Clinton Wade-Lehman.

Sixth yesterday was Theewaterskloof Yacht Club's George Amoils on Home Choice, followed by East London's John Sheppard on Thomair.

With four races left, today is virtually D-Day for Point, Hout Bay and Algoa Bay's Michael Giles on ECL Challenger. Separated by nine and eleven points respectively from Hermanus, they need a dramatic reversal of fortunes to keep them in the hunt — unless the top three are all blown out of the water at some stage. That is as about as likely as the reincarnation of Sir Thomas Lipton as a landlubber.

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