

## KEES BRUYNZEEL DESCRIBES STORMVOGEL'S FIGHTING TRANS-PAC

The author, Mr. C. B. Bruynzeel, left, of Stellenbosch is the most experienced ocean racing exponent in Southern Africa and one of the world's hardest sailors.



PACIFIC OCEAN, ON BOARD STORMVOGEL  
IN THE TRANSPACIFIC RACE LOS ANGELES—  
HONOLULU

**A** WAKENING from a short sleep after a hectic night I find the following cable:  
"CONGRATULATIONS MAGNIFICENT SAIL  
STOP GRATEFUL FOR PICTURES AND STORY BY  
AIRMAIL SAFRICAN YACHTING"

This cable was probably based on headlines in American papers: "Stormvogel leading the fleet to Honolulu . . . Stormvogel first Class A, first in corrected time . . ." This was on the second day of the race. Much has happened since.

Yesterday we were six days out. After continuous fights for the leadership, *Ticonderoga*, the famous American ketch, has overtaken us. Not only did we lose our battle with her but we nearly lost the battle with a tropic storm which hit us yesterday.

After a glorious sail of five days averaging 10 knots and more and a 15 to 20-knot following wind, the sky got overcast and one squall was following the other. First a spinnaker halyard broke with a bang. Luckily the big spinnaker, 3,000 sq. ft. of it, stayed aloft supported by the other halyard.

In the Transpac Race—basically a downhill race of 2,225 miles, 25 of which only are sailed close to the wind—spinnakers may be up for ten days continuously and the wear and tear on halyards, blocks, sails and sheet is enormous.

In the San Pedro Boat Works (Los Angeles)—the best equipped and managed yacht yard *Stormvogel* has ever been, the mast was taken out and all fittings inspected carefully, specially the spinnaker gear which was reinforced and halyards renewed. Notwithstanding all this care, a halyard gave in.

Something had to be done. Dick Enersen, our young American friend, volunteered to go up the mast. The spinnaker was lowered, the halyard set taut, Dick fastened to the Bosun's chair and the clip of the safety harness fastened, gliding along the steel halyard.

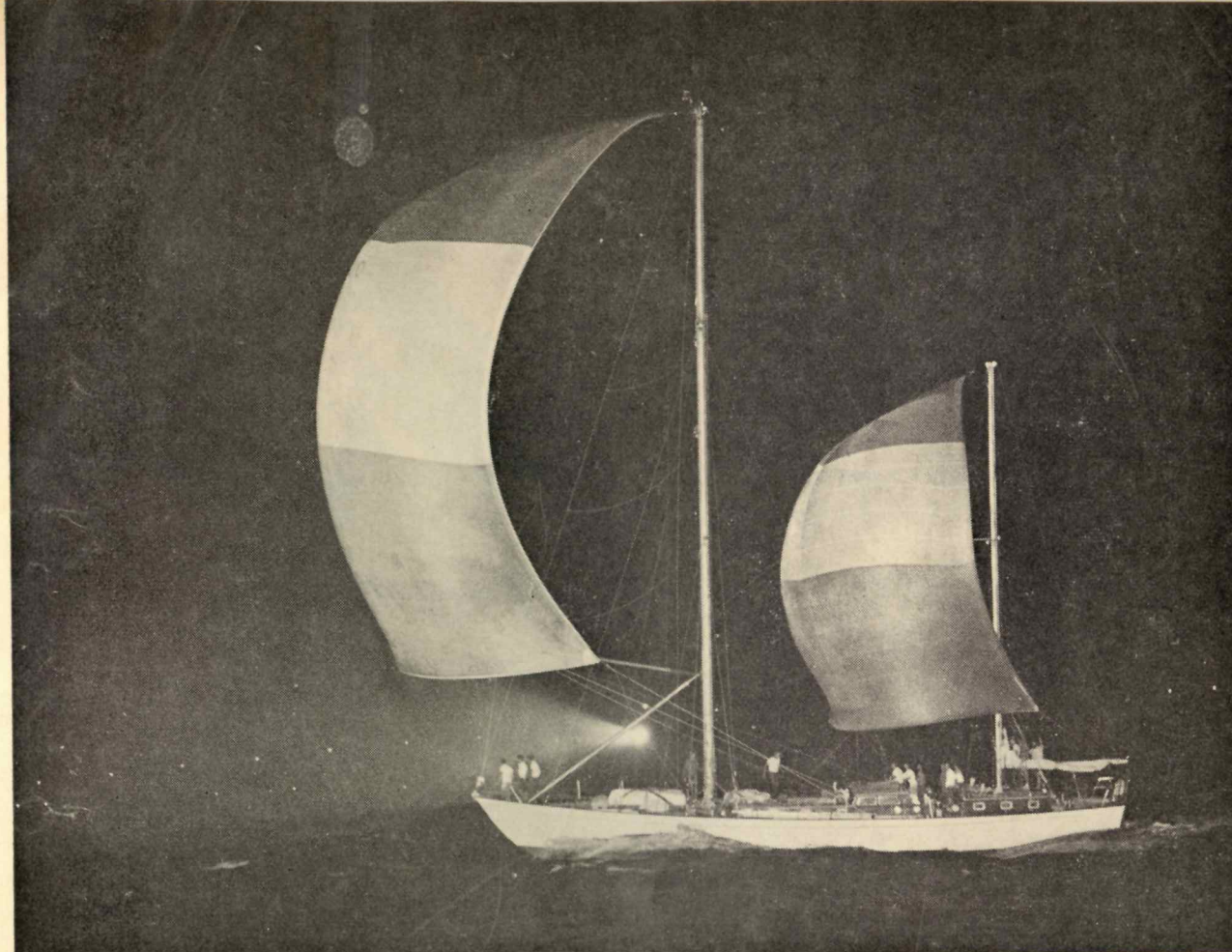
With the high following sea, the movements of the yacht were violent, the mast swaying over an arc of at least 60 degrees. To go up a mast of 80 ft. under these circumstances needs preparations, skill and . . . courage.

Once up to the top, it took more than one hour to replace one of the shackles holding the spinnaker blocks, which had simply worn through and then broken.

Dick came safely down, only a little bruised and exhausted. As he said later: "I made one mistake, I looked down." It must have been a terrifying sight, clamped to that mast top 80 ft. above a boiling sea.

As the wind increased in the meantime, we set the smaller spinnaker, the blue one. As soon as the wind got hold of it, "bang" and the whole sail came down floating forward above the sea as the "Magic Carpet". The crew managed to get it in before it got into the water and under the ship.

A special fitting, a swivel-shackle, had parted under the strain and given in. Both spinnaker halyards were now in top of the mast and could be got down only by another



This picture, airmailed to us from Honolulu, shows Stormvogel crossing the searchlight beam that marked the finish line—after her great race across the Pacific—to break the old record for the 2,250-mile Trans-Pacific Ocean Race. She was pipped on the post for fastest time (only six minutes) by the veteran American ketch *Ticonderoga*. Twin masthead spinnakers, but main boom is broken . . .

climb-up. We deeply regretted not having put a messenger on the halyards, so that they could simply have been lowered when such an accident occurred. Now someone had to go up again, notwithstanding all the risks involved.

But first we had to set more sail. We decided to set a small storm spinnaker with the head connected by a loop to the fore-stay and to be hoisted with the jib halyard. This gave us enough sail for the moment, but would not suffice to replace the big spinnaker when the weather improved.

We all felt that someone should go up before dark and bring the halyards down, but who? I heard our young American friends jokingly talking about it, but no one came forward. As I was not prepared to do this risky job myself, I did not want to ask anybody. Ken Bulstrode, who had been on board since Rio, came forward. So up he went, all precautions taken as before, plus a life jacket tied on to buffer bumps that might occur while swaying against the mast.

My prayers were heard: he came down safely.

With the storm spinnaker up, we were going fast, the log showing every hour between 11 and 12 miles and surfing down the seas which grew bigger and bigger, a tremendous speed was made, spray spouting at the bow, the rigging trembling, the speedometer going up to 16 or even 20 knots a few seconds at each wave and extracting cries of excitement out of the crew.

A "bang" is heard again: the clew of the spinnaker has parted. After lowering the sail, we find that only a lashed-on ring has gone, so we attach the sheet directly to the cringle of the sail.

Now everything looks fine. The crew relaxes and those who are not on watch on deck go below for a good meal and a rest.

However, at 11 p.m. another "bang" is heard and in the light of the moon, it can be seen that the main boom has

cracked, the end trailing through the water. It gives me a shock to see it in this condition: the sad look of a bird with a broken wing. What happened?

According to the American fashion, we had to let the boom all out to get the most advantage from the following winds, and kept it down with a kicking strap; but being so far out, this could only be fastened about 6 ft. from the mast, which left 20 ft. of boom pulling upwards. I did not like the situation but expected, in case of a squall, the kicking strap to break. But the  $\frac{3}{4}$ -in. dacron line proved to be stronger than the boom.

With all hands on deck we lowered the sail and the boom was brought down on deck.

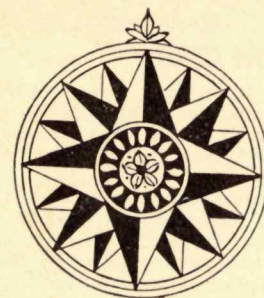
With only a small spinnaker pulling, we were still sailing 10 knots. The mizzen was set and then slides sewn to a stay-sail and this hoisted as a try-sail with the slides in the track of the main sail and a sheet set through a block aft. The sail was only half the size of the main sail but with the wind blowing at 35 knots it was more than enough, together with the storm spinnaker and mizzen, to make *Stormvogel* go 11 knots and more.

Notwithstanding all these mishaps, we never did less than 10 knots. At the morning roll-call, at 8 a.m., we had logged 251 miles. To our disappointment, *Ticonderoga* has gained another 30 miles on us, so, only if a wonder would happen, can we hope to finish first.

Our fight now is with *Kiaola II*, a new aluminium sloop which has a great reputation and a great speed. She is 25 miles south of us and only four miles behind. It looks as if it will now be a strong fight for the second position.

I mentioned the morning roll-call: this is an interesting event in the Transpac Race. The fleet is accompanied by a coast-guard cutter, the *Dexter*. All ships are equipped with a receiver and sender unit to communicate on wave length 2704. At the roll-call, which takes place five minutes past

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## the great TRANS-PAC race

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eight, *Dexter* mentions every yacht in the race by her name, hearing then her position by longitude and latitude. These positions are repeated by *Dexter* so that everybody immediately gets the information regarding the position of each yacht. The whole procedure for 53 yachts does not take more than 20 minutes.

In plotting the position of the leading yachts on the chart we could see at a glance our own position compared with those of the competitors. In a race where you cannot see the other yachts, such information adds great interest to the race and makes it much more exciting.

This sixth day of the race has really been an exciting day . . .

The big Transpacific Race had started on July 4 at noon from Point Fermin (off San Pedro Harbour, Los Angeles) with 53 yachts, 13 of which were class A.

This race is extremely important for *Stormvogel* as this time we are not the biggest boat. Four yachts have higher rating.

Scratch boat is the schooner *Serena*, 83 ft. long (10 ft. longer than *Stormvogel*). She has to give us eight hours time. We have seen her on the slip at San Pedro Boat Works, she is 30 years old but in top condition. Her lines are as sleek as those of a 12 metre yacht. She is one of Alden's best boat designs and famous for her speed on a reach. She has a new "golly-wobbly"—5,000 sq. ft.—which should make her move as a ghost of the lightest of airs.

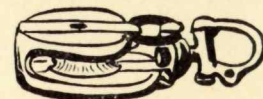
Second highest in rating is *Novia del Mar*, an 89-ft. ketch who has to give us three hours time.

However, we consider three other boats rating a bit less than *Stormvogel* still more dangerous competitors for first boat in.

There is the famous *Ticonderoga* who is well known in South Africa by the fact that Jan Lello and Bjorn Johansen sailed with her. She also is an old lady, but she holds the reputation of being very fast. Built 30 years ago, designed by Herreshoff, she has, like *Stormvogel*, a long waterline and relatively light displacement. She finished many races as first boat in without getting first prize on account of her high rating. Still, *Stormvogel* has to give her time, one hour and 12 minutes.

Then there is *Kiaola II*, a newly-built aluminium yacht of medium displacement. We saw her in the Newport Yacht Harbour, she is a real beauty in line and finish.

Another serious contender is *Audacious* who, under the name of *Northern Light*, beat us boat for boat in the 1962 Bermuda Race. We have to give her nearly seven hours.



The start is to windward. We succeed in finding a free position at the weather side of the line and only a few seconds after the gun, cross at full speed on top and before our strongest competitors. We are leading the fleet.

West Point off Catalina Island, 24 miles away, cannot be made in one tack. General opinion is to make a long tack towards the island and a few short ones in the lee of the island to round West Point. However, we find a windless pocket, *Ticonderoga* gets entirely stopped in it; we manage to get out of it, but now have the whole fleet on her heels again.

*Kiaola*, followed by *Audacious*, have been able to point

higher than us and go around first. The schooner *Serena*, not so good close hauled, has made an earlier tack, found more wind and is therefore able to round alike with us; *Ticonderoga*, still struggling to find wind, is far astern.

Around the Point, we cannot make the course yet, but the whole tradition of tactics is to sail as far as possible from the island so that we slack sheets a bit and make 8 to 10 knots, following *Kiaola* and *Audacious* with *Serena* to leeward of us and *Ticonderoga* following. Gradually the wind increases and we are slowly, but all so slowly, gaining on the leaders.

During the evening, still more wind. The yankee is changed for a working jib, the main sail needs a reef but how fast we are going! 10 knots and more at the course about 5 points off the wind; *Serena* and *Ticonderoga* steer a fuller course, but even so they cannot cope with us; before dark, we have *Audacious* abeam and only *Kiaola* ahead.

During the night, we sometimes see a light abeam: is it the schooner *Serena* coming up on us? or have we overtaken *Kiaola*? Opinions differ, depending on pessimistic or optimistic characters of the crew members . . .

The 8 o'clock roll-call gives the answer. *Stormvogel* is leading. This happy position is confirmed at roll-call on the third day. However, the wind has now followed the usual pattern and comes from the starboard quarter. We make a course, also in line with the tradition, parallel to the rhumb-line course. The going is wonderful, following wind, our new red, blue and white spinnaker set and a second one flying from our mizzen mast. The sky is overcast, many squalls, but not too serious.

We are constantly logging between 10 and 11 knots and day's run is around 245 miles. We feel very happy and are already speculating to finish as first boat and beating the record of *Morning Star*, the big schooner who set the record for the 2,225-mile race in 1955 at 9 days 15 hours and 5 minutes.

However as hopes are high, disillusion is bound to arrive.



On the fourth day, *Ticonderoga* is reported to leeward and a few miles ahead. *Kiaola* and *Audacious* are both coming up to windward, only a few miles astern. During the day, we can see *Ticonderoga* who is overtaking us. We trim and retrim sails, the helmsman tries to get an extra tenth of a knot speed out of *Stormvogel* but nothing helps. *Ticonderoga* is faster and, in the evening, she disappears over the horizon well ahead of us.

Next day shows also *Kiaola* a few miles ahead, so that it would seem that we dropped to third place. And then we enter the sixth day of the race with its storms, its events and, as if this would not have been enough, the morning of the seventh day finds us with the after-compartment three-quarters full of water . . .

Lucky enough, the watertight bulk head has prevented the water from flowing into the cabin. But this is rather a frightening sight, all this water with the fenders stored there floating around . . . Baling and pumping bring the level down and we now see what has happened. The pipe going from this compartment to the stern has allowed the water from the following seas to enter the locker. Now that we know the cause, the pipe to serve the log line going through it, it is easily plugged.

I am happy when, an hour later, the compartment is dry again. We can now concentrate our attention and hopes on the roll-call.

In fact, notwithstanding all our difficulties in the past days, our speed never dropped below 10 knots and our day's run is 245 miles. How great our disappointment when we to-day hear that *Ticonderoga* has improved her lead on us with another 30 miles and this depresses us greatly.

Thereupon, I got a radio cable from S.A. Yachting: thank you Brian Lello!

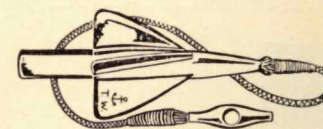
Monday, July 12, 9th day of the race.

The day started with a pleasant surprise: at the roll-call this morning, *Ticonderoga*, who one day ago was still 60 miles ahead, reported a position 12 miles abeam and only

three miles ahead. *Kiaola*, fighting for second place, has dropped 20 miles astern. *Audacious* is 50 miles aft, *Serena*, more than 60 miles, therefore our hopes are high again and we still have 420 miles to go. We sail fast with a medium following breeze.

May it still be possible to overtake *Ticonderoga* and finish first?

Hopes are high, too, for breaking the famous record set by *Morning Star* in 1955. The three leading boats, *Ticonderoga*, *Stormvogel* and *Kiaola* have only to continue their average speed of 10 knots and there is no indication that the present wind will not hold.



We have an experienced crew on board. First there are the "old timers" who joined *Stormvogel* last January in Rio de Janeiro: Donovan Perks and Don Jamieson from South Africa (the third South African crew member, Klaus Borgelt, broke his arm just before the race and will fly to Honolulu to see our arrival).

Derek Vance and Ken Bulstrode came both from England, as well as our cruising skipper, John Miles.

Additional crew members are from the U.S.A., brought together by Dick Enersen who sailed with *Stormvogel* before. Hillyard Brown, a yacht owner himself is hailed by his friends as the best man we could have on board. There are also Gregg Gillette, Chuck Busch, Cecil Mallet and Douglas Peterson—all students, young in years and all with good sailing experience. Most of them have been on the Transpac Race before (Gregg is from Honolulu and flew over to join *Stormvogel*). Then we have an Australian, Ian MacDonald, who sailed with *Ondine* before.

Now comes the most important of all: Henny van den Berge, "catering officer" and sea-proof cook? She has been joined by her French friend Claude Leduc who supplies French desserts to the Dutch meals. The girls have their berths in the fore-cabin on the port side, starboard side being used for storing sails.

The second day out, the girls found me in a serious mood and asked: "CB, what are you thinking about?" I told them that I was wondering about the extra sails we got on board in Los Angeles which are stored in the fore-peak and affected the trim of *Stormvogel*. I told them that I was considering putting the sails in their bunks, which they thought a great joke.

However, one hour later, when the sails from the fore-peak were stored in the fore-cabin, barricading the girls' bunks, they came with bitter complaints that they could not go in or out of their bunks nor wash, powder or paint, without climbing over mountains of sail bags.

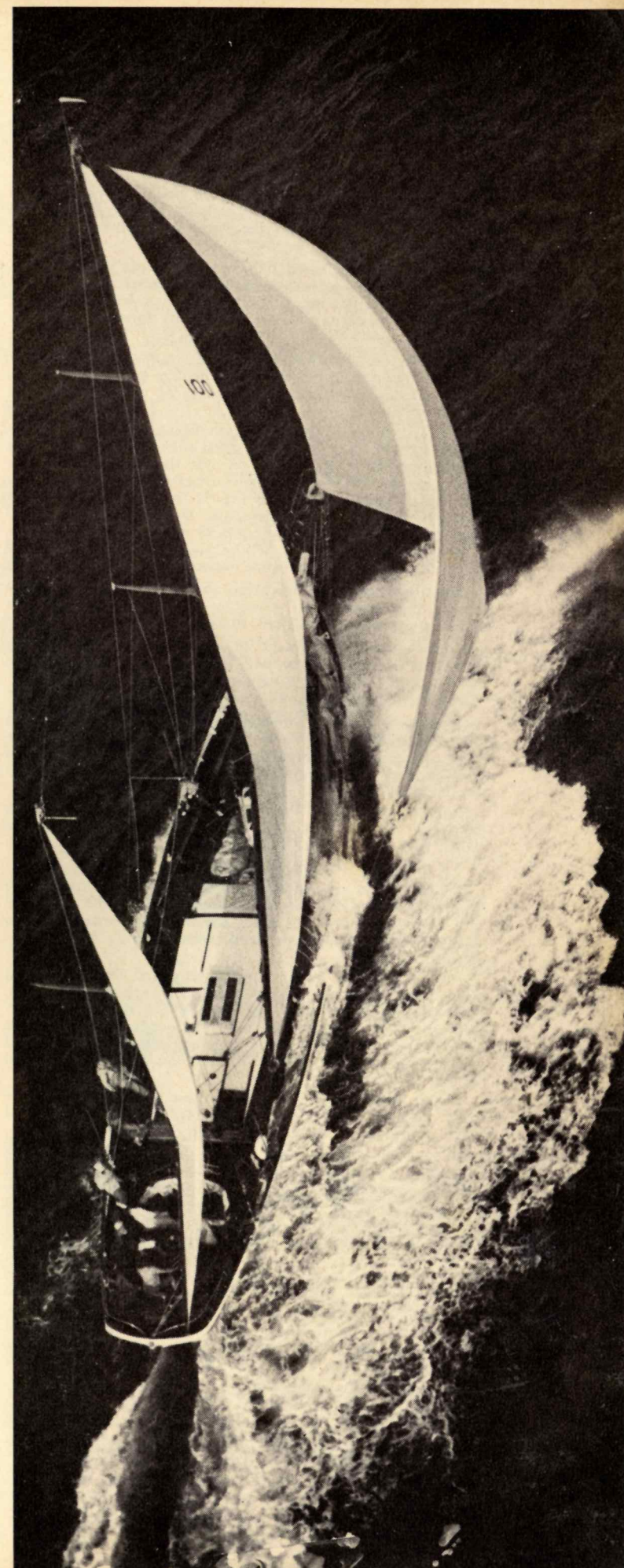
It took more than one hour to convince them that it was in the interest of the race, and that this was their share in the hardships of ocean racing! But I am still not sure that they fully shared my point of view . . .

Tuesday, 13, 10th day of the race.

Again a wonderful night, full moon and the trade winds—on our quarter. The storm has passed, the sea calmed down, this is a real joy. The broken boom does not seem to affect our sailing speed. With the following wind, spin-

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Here is the redoubtable Big Ti reaching hard and pulling a wake like a speedboat, scooping the seas up into her lee scuppers like the clipper ship she is. In fact, no clipper could have done the run from Los Angeles to Honolulu in her record time of 9 days 14 hours in give-and-take weather. In the race *Ticonderoga* showed she was the faster reacher, *Stormvogel* faster before the wind—which was our assessment of the relative performances of the ships two years ago . . .



## the TRANSPAC

(Continued from page 53)

naker and mizzen spinnaker set, the main sail does not do much work any way. The stay-sail, set as a try-sail instead of the main, just catches the wind left between the two spinnakers.

We are doing between 10.5 and 11.5 knots, we think this is more than any other yacht can do under these circumstances; our hopes are high that we may overtake *Ticonderoga* who yesterday was reported only three miles ahead.

At 8 a.m. Los Angeles time, roll-call. Everybody not needed on deck crowds around the radio, eager to hear *Ticonderoga's* position. Have we beaten her? No, she has increased her lead again and reports 22 miles ahead. This seems impossible.

Our last hope of being first to finish dies, but not entirely, she still may break her mast (not likely in a 15-knot breeze) or make a mistake in her day-recording of her position. The remark of a philosopher: "Why worry about one boat ahead when there are 51 astern" helps to keep the spirits up and, what is more, we have made a good lead on our competitors. We are 49 miles ahead of *Kiaola*, 112 of *Audacious*, 56 of *Serena* and there still is a possibility of breaking the all-time record of *Morning Star*.

We still have 170 miles to go and to sail them within 19 hours, this seems well possible if we keep up to our average speed of more than 10 knots.

The constant adjustment of sail and changing mizzen spinnaker to mizzen stay-sail shows that the halyard has nearly chafed through, a new one has to be rigged in.

Another mast climber is needed. Derek volunteers.

The sea moderated, *Stormvogel* heeling over a beam wind and the mizzen mast only half the length of the main mast, the task is comparatively easy; however, Derek is also entitled to membership in the Mast Climber Society. Wednesday, July 14.

It is all over now. We finished last night, four minutes before 11 (local time, 01.56 Los Angeles time). A photo-finish they call it here.

Six minutes after *Ticonderoga*!

In the early afternoon, with only 80 miles to go, we spotted a sail. Could it be *Ticonderoga*? In the morning-call, she was reported 22 miles ahead. Our courses converge and the sail comes nearer and nearer—surely it is *Ticonderoga*.

We have a new chance of finishing first. When we first spotted her, she was a few points forward of our beam. Now we see her nearly abeam. We are definitely faster. We cross her astern at less than 100 yards, then she alters her course: parallel with ours. Set reaching genoa instead of spinnaker. The wind shifts a bit. We have to change to genoa, too.

Under these conditions, she is a bit faster. We lose. She runs off half a mile, then we change course for the last part of the race, the Molokai Channel.

It is a spinnaker course; again the wind increases; the following sea in the channel is higher than outside so that every sea gives us a lift, increasing our speed from 10 to a surfing speed of 16 knots. It is our chance to overtake her, but now she also shows this capacity to surf. The distance grows to  $\frac{1}{4}$  miles.

We have still two miles to go. We pass Coco Head. A jib is necessary. Our last chance: our jib is well organised and timed.

*Ticonderoga* lowers her pole into the water which retards her speed, but not enough. She gets it up and finished six minutes ahead—six minutes after sailing 9 days and 14 hours!

I might call them the worst six minutes of my life.

But we have no time to cry. An enthusiastic welcome is waiting for us. The Transpac Committee boat comes alongside, we are boarded by officials, and beer and champagne. Another motor boat tows us into the Yacht Harbour.

Notwithstanding the late hour, 5,000 enthusiasts are up and cheering us, hundreds of sirens hoot a welcome, a band plays *Sarie Marais* and other South African tunes and warms our hearts. Then we are moored.

Mrs. Fullard-Leo who had seen *Stormvogel* being built during one of her trips to South Africa, but has lived in Hawaii for the past 50 years, came out to greet us on arrival. Other South Africans came on board, specially the specie which the crew is interested in, reminding us of the glorious olden days of Hawaii . . . It all helps. We forget the six minutes, we enjoy the fact that we, together with the winner, have broken the old time record by more than one hour! ■■



Doug Wright operates the board for spectators on the beach, who could then keep tabs on the positions out at sea.

Photo: Bainca Lavies.

## the LIPTON CUP

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It was then raining heavily and visibility was so bad that spectators on the shore had no idea what was going on. The guardship as well as the rescue launch *Jonathan* reported back to the operator of the board for spectators on the beach that it was impossible to give any of the boats' positions.

The mark lifted slightly at the end of the first round when *Mariquita* was leading by 1 minute 50 seconds at the mark, followed 15 seconds later by *Sun Rose* and *Yvette*.

At this stage *Rapid*, sailed by Bill Boulton for the Henley Midmar Yacht Club, retired. She had split her boom on the beat and her sail kept pulling out of the track. She had also broken the clip on her spinnaker sheet.

Another yacht which retired was *Sea Swallow*. She had her big spinnaker up after the start and it had blown to pieces. Her main halliard broke and when at the first mark her pump also broke down they decided to give it up.

The first four boats drew well ahead of the fleet on the next run. There was no change in the positions of the leading boats and *Mariquita* increased her lead till she won by 2 minutes 40 seconds. Second was *Tarpon* and third *Sun Rose*.

The position on points was now such that *Tarpon* had still a chance to win the cup, but only if she won the last race and *Mariquita* would be placed less than fourth.

### Fifth Race

There was a light south-westerly and the course was the small triangle, to be rounded twice.

The first leg was a run and all boats had their spinnakers drawing shortly after the start.

*Hjalmaren* kept to the leeward side of the fleet and reached the first mark practically at the same time as