



SPRINGBOK AT COPENHAGEN: All the excitement of a massed fleet in international class racing is in this stirring shot from the 505 European Championships at Copenhagen, coinciding with an immense concourse of dinghies and ocean-racing yachts for the Centenary Regatta. Bruce McCurrach can be seen with a nice windward position, sail number SA 2084. This is the number used, of course, by Bob Thomas's 505 in Transvaal waters.

505 EUROPEAN CHAMPS

BY BRUCE MCCURRACH, WHO SAILED IN THEM

THE 1966 European 505 Championships took place in the Sound off Copenhagen between August 5 and 11, coinciding with the Royal Danish Yacht Club's Centenary Regatta, at which more than 1,000 yachts had come to compete in World, European and Gold Cup Championships and also for prizes offered by the Royal Danish Yacht Club.

The 505s were based at Charlottenlund, which is half-way between Hellerijn and Shovshoved Yacht Clubs and the races were held over an Olympic-type course off Tearback.

Seventy-six boats from nine nations entered for this event. To mention a few names like the Farrant brothers from England, past world champion, Buffet, Pierre Poullain from France, Rappard from Switzerland, Hans Fogh from Denmark shows that the competition was stiff.

I was sailing a borrowed Danish boat, built by Honnor Marine, and had Ole Gunnar Petersen as my crew. Ole has crewed for Hans Fogh in the past two Olympics and for Paul Elvström on many occasions, so I had no excuse for the front end of the boat. All we were short of was more practice to work up the team, especially when it came to spinnaker work on the strong-wind days, but time was against us so we did as best we could without practice.

For the first race, on Friday, August 5, the wind was blowing about 15-20 m.p.h. from the south-west. All boats got off to a good start and the lead was soon taken by Farrant, who was never passed and went on to a comfortable win, second place going to Pierre Poullain and third to Dan Bowles, myself finishing 33.

The second race was in even gustier conditions, blowing about 25 m.p.h. at the start and freshening to at least 35 m.p.h. in the puffs. Once again the Farrant brothers were first at the first mark, followed by Poullain, who not long after rounding the mark was one of the first of many to capsize as the wind increased.

The second leg was a broad reach with the wind at 35 m.p.h. It is difficult to explain the thrill and sensations one had on this leg, the water was shooting up the centreboard case in a solid sheet for at least three feet; all round rudders were breaking, masts snapping and falling; and boats were capsizing everywhere.

After rounding the first mark in the twenties, I suddenly found myself lying sixth at the third, but half-way up the beat after having passed two more dinghies, the committee boat came motoring past the leading men flying the International Z flag which meant they had abandoned the race.

At this stage only 15 boats were left so it was rather a wise decision on behalf of the committee, as much as I would have liked to carry on.

An interesting sight remained as people were bringing their boats back to the dinghy hard, half were arriving from the seaward side and the other half coming in by road. Those coming in by road had been towed into Skovshoved harbour, the nearest for the rescue boats to drop the disabled before dashing off for more customers.

In all, a lot of masts and many rudders were broken, plus a good supply of sails blown to shreds.

Sunday, August 7, the resail of the second race and the third race following directly afterwards; again the wind on the fresh side but rather shifty. I got off to a good start and was fourth round the first mark but lost a few places off the wind and eventually finished twelfth, first place going to the Farrant brothers and second to Christian Bath.

Many boats capsized again during this race on the downwind legs of the course.

The third race was almost a replica of the second, with Farrant out in front again, followed by another Englishman, G. Rogers, and Pierre Breteche from France third, myself finishing only twenty-fifth.

I lost my report on the fourth race, so no comment. In the fifth race the wind had swung into the south and was blowing off the open sea, just after the start which had been a general recall.

I misjudged my position and was caught port and starboard—and out of the race.

Not long after the start the wind swung farther into the east and put a lot of people off their bearings, so the majority of the fleet headed for the wrong mark. Buffet and Fogh noticed all were going for the wrong mark, but kept on until they were sure which was correct, rounding a long way ahead of the others. The race ended in a follow-my-leader course with some of the boats having to set spinnakers to run back to the first mark.

Buffet led the whole way, but was disqualified for being over the line after the one-minute rule had been introduced after the general recall.

First place then went to F.1877, Davy Lebrun, and second to Hans Fogh, with Peter Bainbridge third.

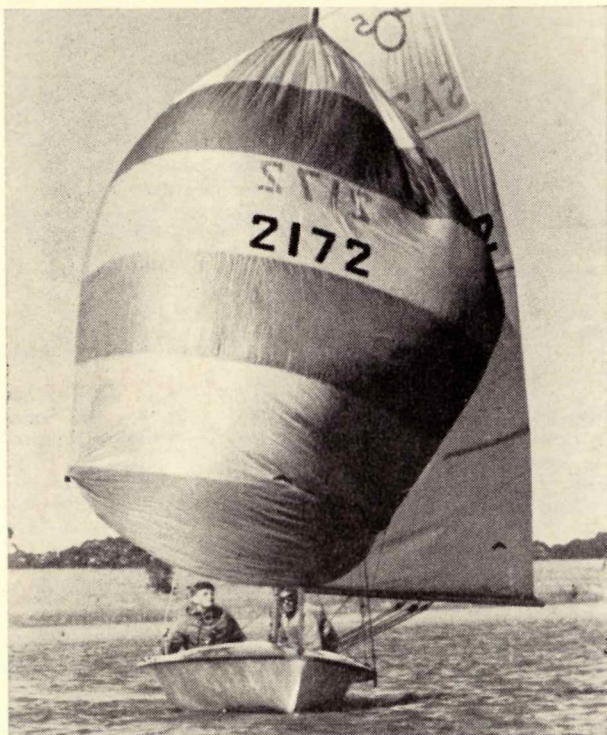
The sixth race started in rather fresh winds again, with many boats capsizing even before reaching the start. Soon the two Englishmen, Farrant and Bainbridge, started

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IN LIGHT AIRS: Keith Daff, skippering Mischief, at the 505 Interclub Regatta held at Rietvlei.

Photo: Jo Crewe-Brown

The 505 CHAMPS . . .

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moving ahead with Hans Fogh lying third. I was in tenth position after sailing the first triangle but half-way up the beat my rudder pintles broke, which put me out of the race.

Bainbridge went on to win with Farrant and Fogh second and third and Buffet fourth.

For the seventh, and last, race the wind was in the south again and had built up rather a nasty sea, gusting about 25-30 in the rain squalls. The Farrant brothers had already won the series, so did not take part but went sight-seeing instead; so it was a fight between Bainbridge, Bath, Poullain and Fogh for second and third positions overall.

Jørn Bond from Denmark jumped away at the start and was never headed. Bath held on to his second position for the whole race, closely followed by Bainbridge, Fogh and then myself, which was my best position for the whole of the series.

Our performance was improving with each race as Ole and I got down to a bit of teamwork which is most important in racing a 505, especially in strong winds.

Overall, the Farrant brothers, without any question at all, were the masters with Peter Bainbridge hot on their heels. Unfortunately for Peter he missed the first race so was unable to discard one race.

An open-air prize-giving at the Royal Danish Yacht Club grounds in Skovshoved harbour concluded the 1966 505 European Championships. ■■

skipper-crew partnership—they will be a formidable team with every prospect of achieving excellent places at future regattas.

The two other expert skippers who did not sail were Bryan Metcalfe, who very considerably sacrificed the season's opening regatta to put his beautifully-conditioned boat on the *Rand Daily Mail's* Great Outdoors Exhibition, and Hellmut Stauch, who was overseas.

The tune-up race on Saturday morning was held in moderate winds with Leenstra winning comfortably. The gusts rocketed down the narrow north leg of the dam on Saturday afternoon and the race developed into a survival of the fittest. Many yachtsmen capsized and one broke his mast. John Tainton, who is one of the rising F.D. skippers in the country, sailed magnificently, winning comfortably and beating Leenstra into second place.

Don Ord, who capsized and righted himself immediately, finished third.

The second race became a battle between local skippers with Ord and Tainton vying for first place. Tainton eventually won with Ord second and Leenstra third. On Sunday afternoon Cinderella showed its vicious unpredictability. The wind was blasting from the south-west, making the beat from the north-east mark a cruel necessity.

If skippers ventured too close to the trees on the west, they sailed into a virtual dead calm patch. They had to keep along the club shore, with short tacks and taking advantage of the gust and lifts.

Ord secured an incredible lead in the first round. He capsized but righted himself, allowing only Leenstra to get through. It will give readers some idea of how far Ord was ahead when only *one* boat passed him in spite of the strength of the wind.

Leenstra steadily increased his lead and with a frighteningly fast spinnaker run, managed to win by three minutes. Ord was second and Tainton third.

Monday's race was sailed in light, variable winds and soon became a tussle between Ord and Tainton. On the last round Tainton dropped his spinnaker boom, allowing Ord through to win.

Final results: Tainton, 1; Ord, 2; Leenstra, 3 and Graham 4.

The first three placings were extremely close, thanks to the low-point scoring system. It would be easy to dismiss Tainton's victory as the feat of an experienced man sailing in home waters. Some of his ability may be due to this, but unmistakably this fanatically keen skipper has the qualities of a first-rate F.D. champion.

His career in the class will be worth watching.

This writer was taken to task light-heartedly some time ago by the Sprog Association for having the temerity to suggest that inland Sprog skippers were not up to the standard of their comrades on the coast. The Sprog Association then bravely challenged coastal skippers to venture inland and suffer a crushing defeat at the Highveld Sprog Championship.

Regrettably only one semi-coastal skipper accepted the challenge and travelled to Pretoria Sailing Club for the duel. Louis Herridge really showed the Transvalers how to handle a Sprog in their own waters. He won every race, although some of them narrowly, and must have set a Highveld record for versatility.

If this is what *one* coastal skipper can do, the Highveld Sprogs should be very thankful they were not given a run for their money by the crack sailors from Zeekoevlei!

The Sprog Highveld Championship is the brain-child of the husband-and-wife team, Paddy and Phyl Pearce, who not only sail extremely ably, but also run a very efficient Sprog Association. They took the initiative in starting the annual event last year (they were even given the supreme compliment last month by being asked by the F.D.s if they did not mind the F.D. event copying the name after the Sprog week-end) and were the prime movers again this year.

Louis Herridge, the 16-year-old schoolboy-sailor from Zululand Yacht Club, Natal, and his brother David, showed all the skill and intelligent tactics which made them national Dabchick champions two years ago. They sailed superbly in the heavy conditions. It seems that if the two