

# Pocket maxi Exile takes over lead

## SAILING

HONG KONG-registered pocket maxi Exile took the lead from race favorite Morning Glory 24 hours into the Sydney-to-Hobart ocean yacht race Friday.

With the leaders approaching Bass Strait en route to the island state of Tasmania, Warwick Miller's 66-foot Exile was one nautical mile ahead of the German-owned Morning Glory as the fleet sailed under spinnakers in a 15-knot northeasterly breeze.

The lead was a major turnaround for Exile's crew, which overshot the start line on Sunday.

Seemingly oblivious to the error, the green-hulled 20-meter yacht dashed 3km down Sydney Harbor, eager to grab the honor of being the first to pass the rocky heads and push into the Pacific.

But a radio call ordering it to turnabout and start again behind the fleet added more than an hour

# Wright duo face Olympian challenge

NATAL ON SATURDAY

SAILING  
ROY DUNSTER

28/12/1996

THE big regatta this weekend – the Sprog Nationals – will be sailed from the Henley Midmar Yacht Club.

First start is today, around noon, and the organisers hope to complete 14 races by the end of the series on Tuesday.

The competition is likely to be fierce. John/Emma Wright from Gauteng will defend their title, but will be hard pressed by Olympians Ian Ainslie and Bruce Savage.

Other teams likely to be in the hunt include Wellington/Mike Pammenter and Mark Statham/Barbara Heathcote.

Enthusiasm for the clash is at an all time high, especially in Durban. Boats have been bought from around the country and several top yachties recently joined the fleet.

For the first time in a number of years, the Nationals have attracted sailors from the Western Province, including Robyn Keen, who took third place at the Laser Radial World Youth

Championships, earlier this year.

Expect about 25 boats on the start line and major parties afterwards.

With the Sprog 50th anniversary this year, the fact that last year's regatta in the same place was a great success – the event finishing on New Year's Eve – and the fact that there will be large numbers of yachties together, there will be much to celebrate.

The other important event this weekend is the Flying Fifteen Kwa Zulu-Natal Provincials, hosted by Royal Natal Yacht Club as part of the Mini Regatta for small keelboats.

Racing is off-shore and started yesterday with eight races being planned for the four days of the competition.

Flying Fifteen numbers are down slightly with only eight boats making the first start, but the organisers expect 19 boats (Flying Fifteens and others) to join in the series.

Finally, congratulations to Pierre Tostee for the award received recently in Hawaii for the best international newspaper coverage of professional surfing's World Tour.