

Long's record is set for Davey Jones locker in this year's Cape to Rio race

By Dave Beattie

AMERICAN Huey Long's 1976 transAtlantic record of 17 days, five hours on the yacht Ondine, will almost certainly be consigned to the depths in the 1993 Richmans Cape to Rio race, which starts in Table Bay on Saturday afternoon.

Ninety-two boats, ranging in size from 75ft to 31ft, carrying some seven hundred yachtsmen and women, will face the 3pm starting gun that triggers off the fourth Cape to Rio, an event that resumes after a 17-year break.

The handicappers, judging by the times set, are expecting a record, so are a few of the leading skippers. Add to that the improvement in design and construction in the past few years, and it seems that only adverse weather can prevent a record run over the 3 600 miles.

Catamarans are being allowed to compete in the event for the first time, and there is a feeling one of them could be first to

sight Rio de Janeiro's Sugar Loaf.

But they are a special category — the main events are still the IMS (International Measurement System) handicap race for the South Atlantic trophy, and of course, the glamour chase for line honours in the monohull sections.

It is expected to be a 'user friendly' route, following the warm trade winds from the Cape, skirting Ilha de Trindade, to the finish at Copacabana Point. With Rio almost on the Tropic of Capricorn, and roughly on a line with Walvis Bay, the fleet will head in a more northerly direction for about 800 miles before swinging back in a gently curve to the South American coast.

Looking at boats and crews, it is obvious that many are simply out there for the adventure and experience, but in every category there are those who mean business.

According to the fundis, the handicap winner

should come from a yacht in the 40ft to 50ft range, with Hasso Plattner's custom-built 50 footer Morning Glory tipped as the one to beat. But others to watch in the struggle are Brent Sender on Clicks, Ambre Solaire (53ft), Jan Reuvers on the high-tech Wizard (57ft), Gavin Urquhart on Cavalier (44ft) and Commander Gus Mostert on the old, but still game Syfrets Voortrekker II (60ft), one of five SA Navy entrants.

But for line honours, one must look to the big bangers.

Italian businessman C Gritti has spared no expense on the 75ft Pilar the Pulveriser, and those who believe that the pen is mightier than the sword, are certain that the Parker Pens-sponsored maxi will be the first monohull to sight the Sugar Loaf, writing finis to the chances of the other 75 footer in the race, Mike Daly's Aegis Panther. Pilar will be skippered by Bruce Tedder and Panther by Rob Meek, who has already

spoken about doing the crossing in well under 17 days.

But length of waterline, so often a major determining factor, may not be enough in this class fleet.

Don't, for instance, discount the chances of Broomstick, a new 70-footer on loan to the SA Navy. Hanno Teuteberg is the skipper, and the submarine commander has some very fast sailing behind him. Broomstick will fly.

Others to watch among the frontrunners are old rivals Get More Fun, renamed IGI Sea Rescue with Dave Abromowitz at the helm, and The Boss, now Namsea Challenger with Padda Kuttel in charge.

Bertie Reed's Grinaker, now called Harbour Island, is entered in the cruising division, and despite Reed's claim that he is not seriously seeking glory, it would surprise if he is not up with the leading bunch in what will be his fourth Rio race.