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# Atlantic yacht race deadline is extended

By ROGER WILLIAMS

CAPE TOWN — Heavy weather has struck the main body of the South Atlantic race fleet off the South American coast, causing the cut-off date for the race to be officially extended by five days.

This was announced last night by the race chairman, Mr Gordon Webb, who said the decision had been taken by the race committee in Cape Town in response to a request from the communications vessel, Howard Davis, which itself was "bashing through heavy seas into 30-knot headwinds".

Mr Webb said the deadline for the race, originally 2pm GMT on Sunday, February 17, had been

changed to 2pm on Friday, February 22.

"The prize-giving will, however, be held as planned, at Punta del Este on February 17.

"We feel that all the honours in this race will have been decided by then. The reason for extending the deadline is to allow slower boats at the tail-end of the fleet to get a placing in their classes, where they would otherwise have been considered not to have finished the race."

Heavy weather and consequently poor radio communication have put the positions of yachts in the race in doubt — including the position of the boat that could emerge as the overall winner, Spirit

of CIW II.

For the second day running yesterday, the latest positions could not be obtained from the Howard Davis.

Spirit of CIW II, skippered by Ernst van der Laan, when last heard from on Monday was in fifth place on distance and first place on handicap, with 869 miles to go to the finish.

The sloop had, before the adverse weather set in, been considered likely to finish this weekend and her corrected time on arrival — and distances still to go of boats with a chance to beat her — would determine whether she would collect the laurels in this race.