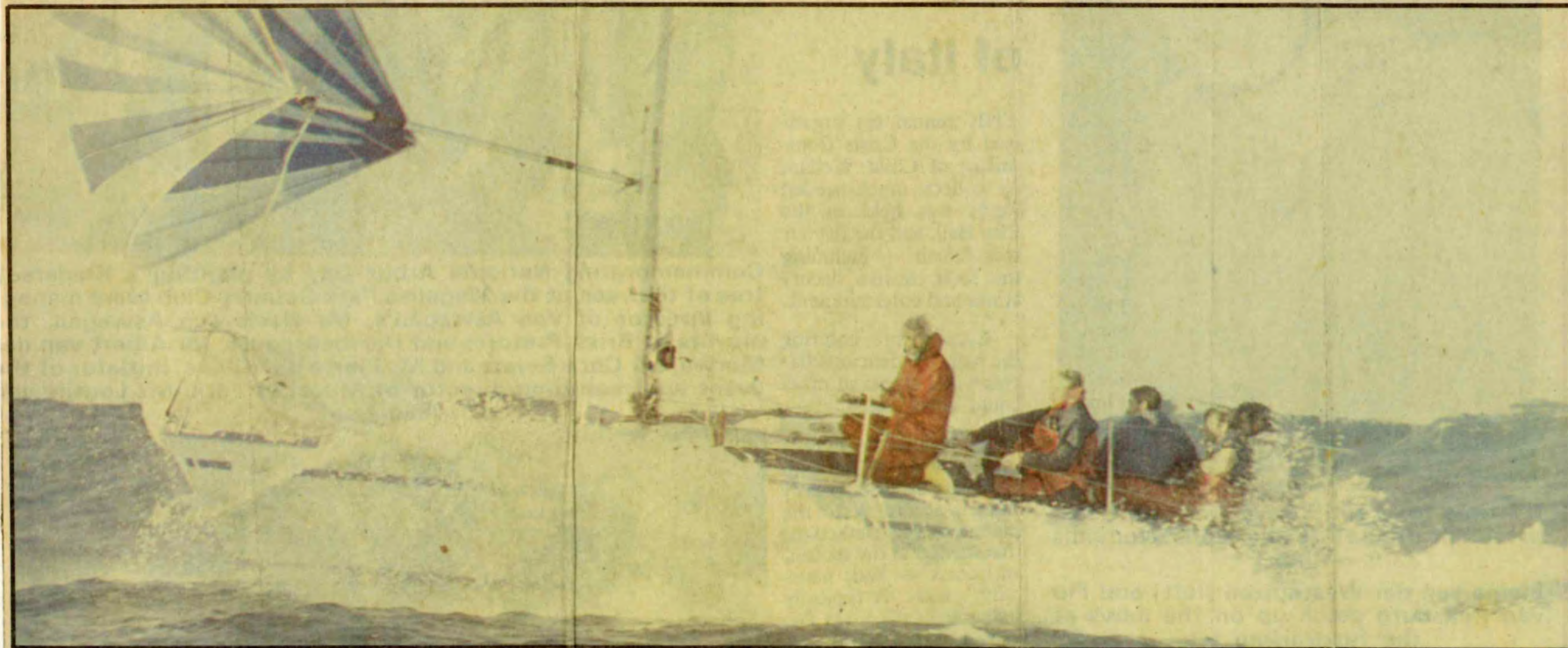


Lipton Cup Challenge is South Africa's most prestigious regatta

Yachtsmen find this just their cup of tea



The crew from the Transvaal Yacht Club, who are to challenge the high seas in South Africa's most prestigious regatta — The Lipton Cup Challenge — on this L26 class Keel boat, "B & G".

DEMOS TAKOULAS
Staff Reporter

SOUTH AFRICA's most prestigious yachting event, the Lipton Cup Challenge started yesterday from Table Bay, where the country's top yachtsmen will be competing to take this coveted trophy home.

The cup, attracting the cream of SA's sailors, is the most expensive prize in any sport in South Africa, beating even the famed Currie Cup, and has been insured for over R350 000.

One time winner of the Lipton Cup, skipper Peter Hishin of the Transvaal Yacht Club and his crew of four, will be competing in the race with their 26-footer, "B & G". The five Johannesburgers, who regularly train at their club's home ground at Hartbeespoort Dam, are eager to get to Cape Town.

Although they have not had much time to practice, with many teams already on the water in the Cape, 42-year-old Hishin says: "If the weather is favourable then we stand a good chance of winning."

A short history of the team: Peter Hishin (skipper and helmsman) — represented SA three times; Jon Hawkins — represented SA twice; Alasdair Ritchie — Transvaal colours; Ron Gurnel — Transvaal colours; and Darryl Yorke — Transvaal colours. The team is co-ordinated by team manager Robert Wallendorf.

This annual event is comprised of five races run over five days, with each race being about 16 to 20 nautical miles. It is sailed under precise regulations, laid down by Sir Thomas Lipton — of Lipton Tea fame — when he donated the cup in 1925. All competing yachts must be 26-footers and have a skipper and a crew of four on board.

The Lipton Cup event is held in various countries, including America, Britain and Australia, and was established after Sir Lipton spent several years challenging for the Americas Cup, to no avail.

Hishin won the cup in '84. This was the first time in its 90-year-history that the cup had been won by an inland club (the Transvaal Yacht Club)

Although he has competed every year since then, Hishin has not been able to snatch the trophy back.

Says this keen sailor of 24 years' experience: "With the Lipton you either win or you're a loser. Coming second in this event doesn't mean a damn!"

With about 31 clubs entering, the surprising aspect is that the winners do not receive a cent in prize money. Being an amateur sport in South Africa, yachting is merely undertaken for the love of the sport.