

Joy for Italian crew as SA finishes fifth

DALE GRANGER

PLYMOUTH: The Italians celebrated their first victory in the Champagne Mumm Admiral's Cup yesterday following the 605 mile Fastnet race, while South Africa emerged with mixed fortunes from the regatta.

After a 20 year absence SA returned to win three races and ultimately the fifth position eclipsed the sixth place they achieved in 1973.

It was a grueling Fastnet

which took over five days to complete in one of the slowest and most frustrating sailing duels for the famous race.

Hurdle

On the final hurdle of the race from Lands End to Plymouth, South African yachtsman of the year Chris King, skipper of the Mumm 36, Sansui Sprinter emerged as the top performer of the team by clinching second spot for the race.

South Africa's other two yachts, the ILC-46 Sansui Challenger (Geoff Meek) and the ILC-40 Sansui Express (Bruce Savage) dropped to fifth and fourth respectively over the line following some exceptionally tight and tenacious match racing in the fleet on the upwind approach to Plymouth.

Britain's Group 4 Seahorse (Robin Aisber) won the big boat class in the Fastnet with Italy's Brava Q8 (Pasquale Landolfi) and Mamma Mia (Paolo Galà)

winning the ILC-40 and Mumm36 classes.

Sansui Sprinter's performance in the Fastnet elevated her overall position to fourth in the Mumm36 class — the best of the South African yachts with Sansui Express fifth in her class and Sansui Challenger sixth.

America were determined to win the Cup for the first time in 26 years but in the end the Italians came from behind with all three of their yachts dominating the Americans.