

# Tabarly shows his hand

3.2.71

From NEVILLE PEAT on board S.A.S. Tafelberg

LAST NIGHT'S POSITION reporting schedule, accounting for more than 40 yachts, was possibly the most dramatic since the Rio race started 17 days ago.

We received French schooner Pen Duick III's position for the first time in nine days. Her silence has aroused disquiet among skippers who feel yachts should be penalised for not attempting to submit positions daily.

Outburst's skipper, Bobby Bongers, went so far as to radio a complaint to Tafelberg which hinted that the race protests committee in Rio might hear from him about tight-lipped competitors.

Pen Duick's Eric Tabarly has nothing to lose by disclosing his position at this stage. With less than 1000 sea miles to go, he and other front runners on the northern route are virtually obliged to point their bows toward Rio. There are few decisions left for leaders to take regarding their routes.

A final one will be on which side they intend to pass Trindade Island, a milestone in the South Atlantic sailing route of square-rigger days.

Robin Knox-Johnson's Ocean Spirit, heads Pen Duick by 50 sea miles with Trindade less than 300 miles away.

Her progress in the freshened easterlies of the past day or two even puts her in front of southerners Albatros II and Mercury in terms of longitude.

## TRADES

Light, variable breezes continue to be forecast for the area in which those two are sailing.

Nearer the Brazilian coast the north-east trades appear to be behaving normally so we can expect a grand finish.

Giving her attention to yachts at the back of the fleet since the week-end, Tafelberg yesterday failed to find the all-woman entry Sprinter.

There is no reason to believe, however, that Sprinter is or will be in distress. Skipper Molly Warr's husband, Ken, reported from Omuramba yesterday that he does not think Sprinter will be able to hoist navigation lights now that her power supply has ebbed.

Her batteries are too weak to even turn her engine to recharge them.

Making fine time westward, Jakaranda is beginning to overtake trailing yachts, among them the Australian yawl Eclipse.

From the archives of  
Richard Crockett &  
Sailing Publications.

[www.sailing.co.za](http://www.sailing.co.za) -  
editor@sailing.co.za